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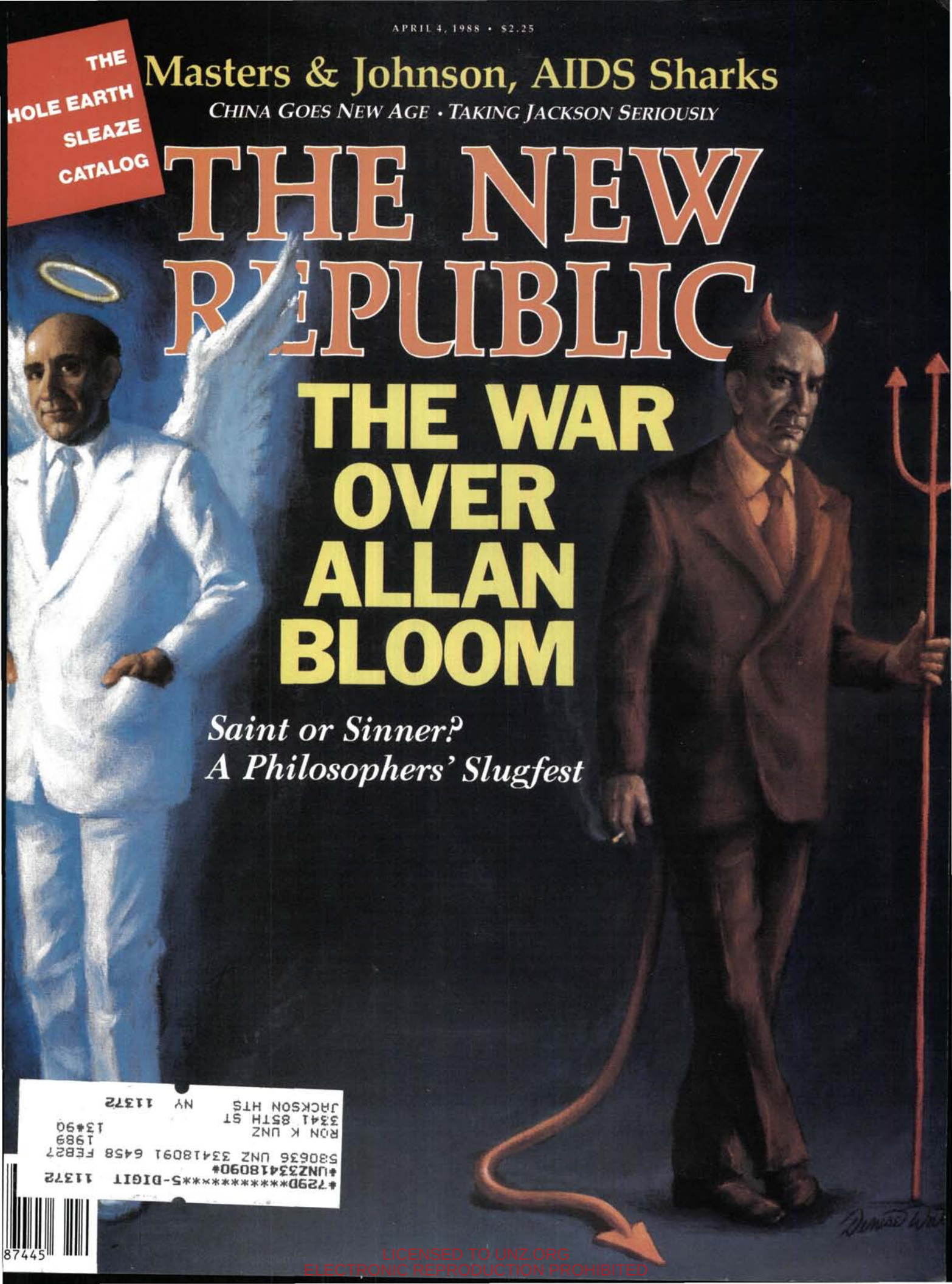

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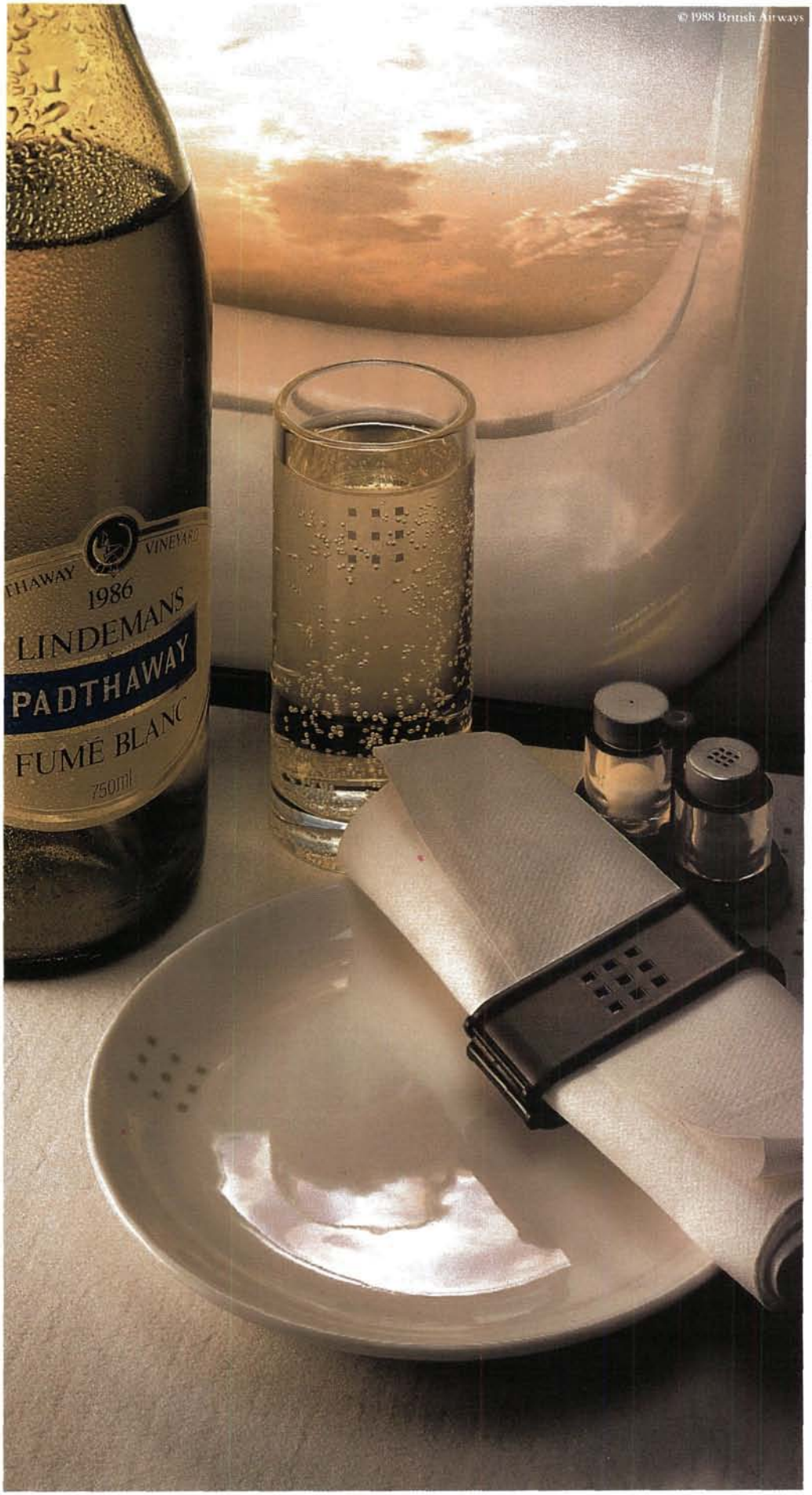

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — APRIL 4, 1988

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FROM WASHINGTON

THE HAZARDS OF DUKE

Hey, how about giving Michael Dukakis some respect? Even after coming in third in the Illinois primary, he's still the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination. He's run more successfully in more places than anyone predicted. On Super Tuesday he tied two Southerners in their own regional primary. Polls show him a 3-2 favorite over Jesse Jackson and a 2-1 favorite over Al Gore among Democrats, while the hankering for Somebody Else (Cuomo, Bradley, Nunn) has evaporated. Polls also show Dukakis doing better than any other Democrat against George Bush.

Yet it seems that the media are plunging right into their "second thoughts" phase about Dukakis without ever awarding him his initial moment in the sun. Richard Gephardt, Al Gore, Jesse Jackson, and even Paul Simon have each enjoyed that period when the reporters discover unexpected reservoirs of popular support and weave triumphal scenarios, while the pundits discover new sophistication, humanity, wisdom, and ability to pluck authentic chords with the common folk. Even Bob Dole got a bit of the Mount Rushmore treatment for a while, and George Bush is getting it now.

When's the Duke's turn? The rap on him hasn't changed since he entered the race, widely regarded as a poor substitute for Mario the Unattainable: he's a "technocrat" with no charisma, he's a Northeastern ethnic with a funny name and no national appeal, he's way too liberal. Hopeless. His every victory turns to ashes in the commentators' mouths. New Hampshire? Doesn't count—he lives next door. Super Tuesday? Florida and Texas aren't really Southern states. Anyway, in the few days before the election he was expected to do even better. His general ability to accumulate votes? Heck, it's all money. Anyone could do it with a fat bankroll. (John Connolly, for example.)

Judging from the votes and the polls, I may not be the only citizen in America (even if I am the only one in Washington) who finds Dukakis's stiff, earnest persona more endearing than those of our more ardent suitors. After Ronald Reagan, people may be tired of charisma. They may think there are worse character failings than taking "Swedish Land Use Planning" to read on the beach. They may feel it's time for a tightwad who wears wash-and-wear shirts. Jackson and Gephardt may be tribunes of the people, but Dukakis is the only one in the lot who comes off as a regular, decent, no-nonsense, middle-class guy. Smart, hard-working, honest, well-meaning. Boring, but so what? Maybe I'm a sucker, but I'd be crushed if it turns out he really doesn't take out his own garbage at home in Brookline.

Dukakis is the only remaining candidate of either party who hasn't been reinventing himself every other week. Jackson, 1984's Monster from the Black Lagoon, is happily sinking into statesmanship. Gephardt has flip-flopped right off stage. Gore has gone from conventional liberal to Dixiecrat hardliner to Gephardt-style populist. Dole, in his day, has been every kind of Republican from go-along, get-along moderate to acid-tongued extremist. Bush, playing the Reaganite, is a sheep in wolf's clothing. Ironically it is the uptight, humorless Dukakis who seems most "comfortable in his own skin," to cite the official standard of campaign-trail media psychologists.

Sure, he exaggerates his responsibility for the "Massachusetts miracle." But Dukakis is also the only remaining candidate of either party who's actually run a government, and run it successfully. It seems to me, and apparently to many others, that this should count for more than the foreign policy "experience" of sitting on congressional committees and going on foreign junkets.

What's more, Dukakis's philosophy

continued on page 41

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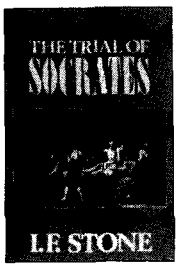

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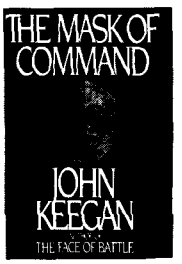

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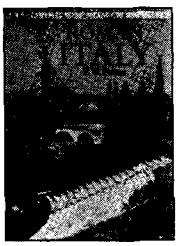

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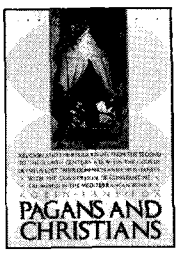

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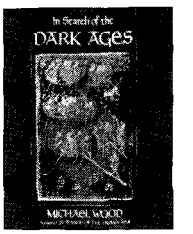

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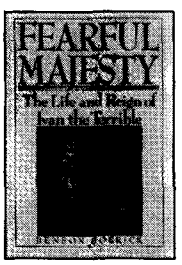

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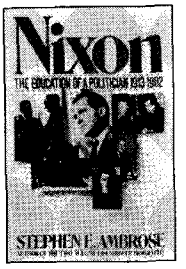

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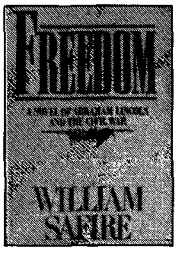

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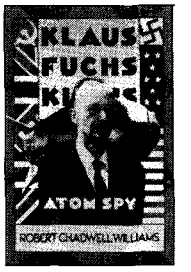

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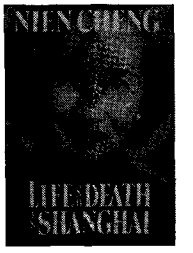

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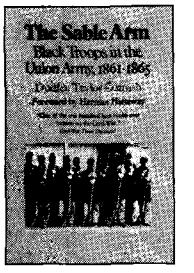

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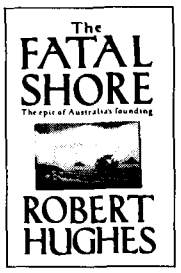

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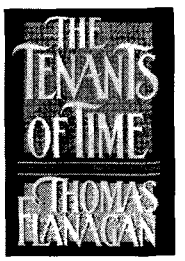

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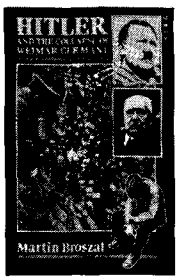

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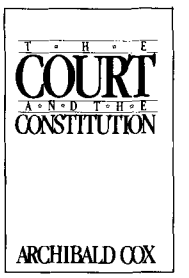

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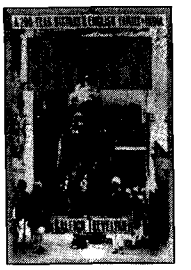

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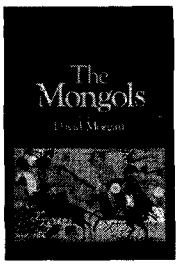

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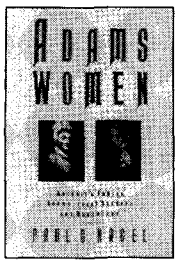

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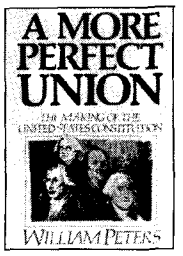

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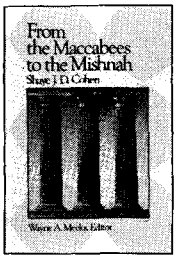

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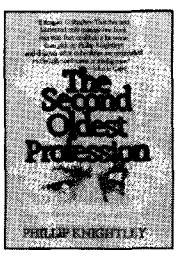

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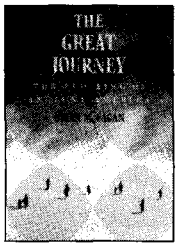

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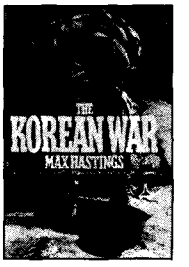

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CULTURAL PRESCRIPTIONS

To the editors:

In "The Culture of Apathy" (February 8) TNR suggests that our barbarism is due to a "sense . . . that nothing is true and everything is permitted." Yet perhaps the problem is not that nothing is true and everything is permitted, but that in our advanced state of pluralism we, as a society, have simply come to disagree too sharply over what is true and what is false, what is permissible and what is not. In this light, the issue becomes one of re-establishing an intellectual and moral consensus. But is there any hope of achieving this, given that the traditional pillars of such a consensus—a philosophically or religiously grounded and socially shared understanding of what human life is about—have been knocked from under our feet by the processes of modernization? We should have a public debate on what we are willing to dub the "numbing norms" of our culture of "random drugs, random sex, and random violence." But the pleasure (and pain) of talking about it is all we're likely to get.

MYKOLAS J. DRUNGA
Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

The problem today is that people whose ideology commits them to an absolutist position on individual liberties are unwilling to take responsibility for, or even to recognize, the consequences of that stance. TNR seems to strike just the right note in stressing how "barbarism" most cruelly affects the poor and the powerless. If progressives truly aspire to help these people, they must abandon their love of abstraction and unite on these social problems with concerned people who may not share their ideology.

DAVID RANKIN
Torrance, California

To the editors:

TNR's editorial on cultural decline and the costs of living without boundaries reminded me of what Edmund Burke had to say about liberty 200 years ago. In "Reflections on the Revolution in France," Burke stated that liberty "without wisdom and without virtue" is "the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness." Burke later elaborated, noting that people are qualified for liberty "in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites." Fifteen years ago, Alexander Bickel wrote in TNR that there was much liberals could learn from Burke ("Reconsideration: Edmund Burke," March 17, 1973). Perhaps Burke also has much to teach liberals today about the consequences of a failure to acknowledge, as you say in "The Culture of Apathy," that it is "wise restraints that make us genuinely free."

JAMES A. PROZZI
Allison Park, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Do you really expect us befogged and insouciant liberals to buy a jeremiad that lumps together (under "barbarism") the truly nefarious—drug trade, violence on television, the Reaganite polity of greed—with young people's innocent need to discover their bodies as well as their minds? What sort of restraint on the rights of privacy, of children, of criminals, even, God forbid, of pornographers do you have in mind? And all this stuff about the iniquitous city: Are you really suggesting that the arts and letters languish because of insider trading and dirty song lyrics?

SEYMOUR CHATMAN
Berkeley, California

To the editors:

Samuel Adams reportedly warned us that history reveals that all democracies eventually commit suicide. Wouldn't it be more helpful to label our TV-dominated culture today as "the culture of democratic suicide" or "the culture of national suicide"? When Congress neglects to protect the health of our society's children—particularly the health of their brains—and they consequently score miserably compared with students of other industrialized nations, it does seem like suicide to me. Any society's economic survival in an increasingly high-tech world marketplace—or military survival in high-tech warfare, no less—is dependent upon brain power and skills, isn't it?

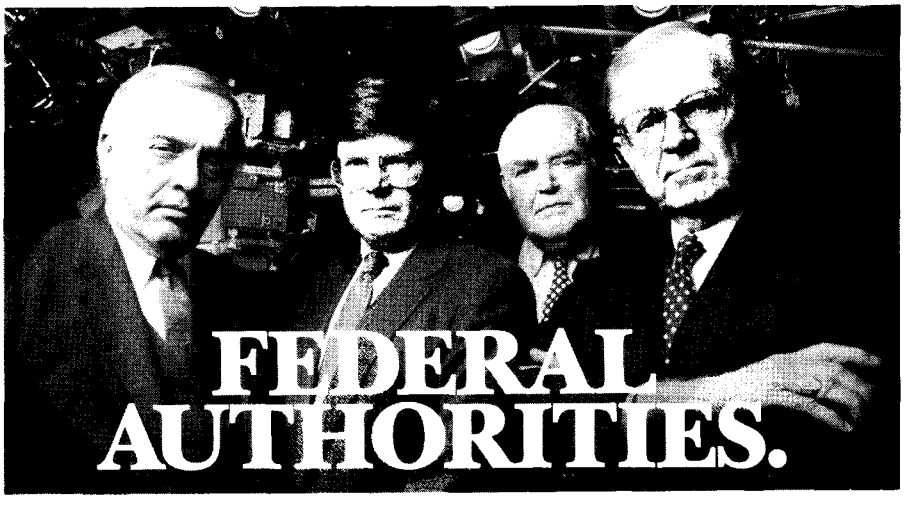
CYRUS J. STOW
Conyers, Georgia

A VOTE FOR MR. DEMOCRAT

To the editors:

TRB's column entitled "Mr. Democrat" (March 21) is sadly misguided and

continued on page 41



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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 4, 1988

BUSHOVER

With the Republican nomination all but won on Super Tuesday, George Bush went to Illinois and delivered his first real theme speech for the general election campaign. Its basic message was that Ronald Reagan had transformed America for the better and that Americans need to choose now whether they want to persist along the same path "or go back, turn back, run back to the old answers and the old remedies." What Bush proposes as objectives of his administration constitute mere tinkering with the Reagan formula. He wants to freeze spending to cut the deficit, control Pentagon waste, cut capital gains taxes to 15 percent, and expand education programs. It is a smugly self-satisfied vision of America, and it's ripe for attack by an invigorated Democratic Party.

One of the very small adjustments Bush wants to make in Reagan's world is to cut the sleaze. "I am personally disturbed at the breaches of ethics I have seen the past few years in government," he said, naming no names, in this speech to the Governor's Club of Illinois. "I am tired of being embarrassed. I am tired of our children seeing things that should embarrass us all." His solution? "Once elected, I'd appoint an ethics panel to work right there in the White House" to draft a new code of conduct on conflicts of interest "that will help us avoid the excesses of the past."

Well, sorry, but that is not quite good enough. *Before* he is elected, the public deserves a full accounting of Bush's role in the Iranamok affair—not only as to its ethical aspects, but also as to its policy implications. Iranamok constitutes the crowning failure of Ronald Reagan's second term. Bush has said, at times, that he knew nothing about any of it—the original arms sales to Iran, the trading of arms for hostages, or the diversion of arms profits to the Nicaraguan *contras*. As evidence was uncovered, he retreated to his present stance of partial admission, partial denial. He knew of and approved the sales, he says, as an opening to Iran. The sales devolved into a bad bargain for hostages, he now says, but (like President Reagan) he didn't realize it was happening, even though George Shultz and Caspar Weinberger did. Of the diversion to the *contras*, the shredding of documents, and the lying to Congress, he still says he knew nothing.

George Bush's claim to be president rests on his experience. Yet he has been almost a silent vice president for the past seven years. He took on a few minor projects—deregulation, drug interdiction in South Florida, reducing government paperwork—but kept quiet at meetings where big issues were discussed. He confined his true opinions for his private lunches with the president, he claims. Now he says he will not talk about Iranamok because that would violate the principle of presidential confidence.

The truth is that both Reagan and Bush are using this supposed principle as a screen to conceal Bush's role in Iranamok. There's a simple way out: for President Reagan to release Bush from his oath of silence, and to come clean himself—and in detail—about the advice Bush gave him. If Reagan and Bush persist in refusing to disclose what went on, we are left to conclude they have something to conceal, which (assuming the worst) would be a full, enthusiastic Boy Scout/lapdog-like endorsement of the leader's arms-for-hostages operation. If the truth is better—if, say, Bush determinedly warned Reagan not to get into arms sales but fell into silent support when Reagan made up his mind, Reagan would be doing Bush a favor to tell all.

Bush contends that the general public doesn't really care about Iranamok. But those who do could constitute the balance of power in the November election—especially if former administration officials are on trial in the fall and the Democrats can exploit the charges. At the moment, polls suggest that this will be a very close election. Bush, well known as he his, is already trailing lesser-known Michael Dukakis 50 percent to 47 percent, according to the Harris poll, and 52 percent to 43 percent, according to the Field Poll in California. According to *Time*, Bush leads Dukakis by 42 percent to 37 percent; according to *Newsweek*, it's 49 percent to 43 percent; and according to Gallup, 52 percent to 40 percent, none insurmountable margins. Bush handily outpolls Albert Gore at the

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moment, but if Gore catches fire among Democrats, he will presumably pull even or ahead of Bush as well. So if Bush and Reagan do not reveal what Bush's advice was—that is, how good his judgment was—the Democrats are free to exploit the case to their heart's content, possibly all the way over the top in November.

Another poll, by NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal*, suggests another advantage for the Democrats. Asked, in general, whether they wanted the next president to continue with Ronald Reagan's policies or change direction, only 35 percent favored persisting, while 58 percent wanted a change. What George Bush wants to do, as his remarks in Chicago indicate, is to continue. The Reagan revolution, he said, "is not a complete triumph. It's a beginning. From here, from now, you build."

How? "We've got a problem with the deficit," he says, and charges that the Democratic answer is to raise taxes. But "if we raise taxes to close the deficit, Congress won't close the deficit. Congress will spend more money and make the deficit worse." Instead, says Bush, "I'm going to freeze spending, get out the waste, remove the things we don't need." He does not say what will be cut beyond some unspecified Pentagon waste. He rules out Social Security cuts. Of course, you can't come close to bringing the deficit under control by eliminating "waste." Either you must slash the defense budget in ways Bush—and we—certainly would not support, or you must raise taxes, or you must dig into middle-class entitlements. All the surviving presidential candidates of both parties have been equally dishonest about this mathematical reality. But the dishonesty of Bush, heir-presumptive to the man who created these deficits and author of the memorable description "voodoo economics," is more contemptible.

Education is Bush's answer to every social problem, and to nearly every economic problem. "Education can be our most important trade program," he says in other speeches,

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	GOING FOR BROKERED	*	8
2.	SACRIFICE OF YITZHAK	4	9
3.	LOUD AND CLEAR	—	1
4.	RAPE OF THE LOCKS	5	5
5.	HAND-ME-UPS	*	37
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7.	CACHE FLOW	*	10
8.	WEST MEETS EAST	*	3
9.	NATIVE SUM	—	1
10.	TIME HUSTLES ON	—	1

1. GOING FOR BROKERED

Democrats. All anybody wants to talk about is the Democrats' brokered convention. What will the candidates want in Atlanta's back rooms? This is a real throwback: the presidency as horse trading. Dukakis has tried to use the specter of brokering as a campaign issue, but who's he kidding? As one wise man put it, it's too delicious not to think about.

2. SACRIFICE OF YITZHAK

Israel. Whatever Shamir's visit may achieve politically, it has already had unusual social results here. American Jews have been slamming each other on national talk shows over public criticism of Israeli policies. There are signs of serious rifts within a once-solid community. Even the Orthodox vs. Reform "Who is a Jew?" controversy did not stir up this much heat.

3. LOUD AND CLEAR

Gallaudet. The success of the Gallaudet student revolt attests to the power of the words "civil rights." It's a feel-good story in which the good guys won. But hey! Where are you going? The deaf think this is just the beginning of their struggle, whereas the mainstream is already filing out in cathartic satisfaction.

4. RAPE OF THE LOCKS

Panama. Noriega may be gone by the time this appears. Will that reduce the amount of drugs coming in? Will drug-dealing officials elsewhere get out of the business as a result? Drugs have as much to do with events in Panama as medical students had to do with Grenada. The lesson for Latins is to keep things stable in areas of U.S. interest, and to keep away from Cuba.

5. HAND-ME-UPS

Iranamok. McFarlane has turned state's evidence. Do you care? The Republicans say nobody cares, and apparently they're right. Speculation that future indictments to be handed up may affect Bush's campaign seems completely unfounded, barring an indictment of Bush himself.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

6. MORE PERFECT ANSCHLUSS

Waldheim. In the coverage of the Anschluss anniversary, commentators unexpectedly offered Waldheim the sanctuary of perspective. Waldheim's mendacity notwithstanding, there are bigger monsters heading states today, none of whom is persona non grata. Among those who, unlike Waldheim, had the power to act against genocide were Western leaders of the time.

7. CACHE FLOW

Post-Crash. One result of the Crash seems to have been a striking rise in our abysmal savings rate. Fearing recession, people finally have begun socking money away. A contributing factor: the aging of America. Older boomers are reaching the end of their "spending years" (about 25-45). With kids out and the car paid for, they're saving.

8. WEST MEETS EAST

Afghanistan. The West's line on events in Afghanistan is pure schadenfreude. Everything about the Soviet experience there invokes the parable of the Soviet's Vietnam. But the What Now? coverage that is just beginning suggests a different parable. "The ghost of Khomeini," as one French journal notes, hovers over the war, while the Western conceit of the golden political middle has fogged the West's outlook about who takes over when the Ruskies leave.

9. NATIVE SUM

Black culture. Black artists addressing problems (as they see them) within their community are facing continual opposition. The best-known of several recent controversies involved black women novelists and their portrayal of black men. Spike Lee's *School Daze* has sparked similar problems over his depiction of relations between light-skinned and dark-skinned blacks. This artist-audience problem dates back at least to the Harlem Renaissance.

10. TIME HUSTLES ON

'70s nostalgia. '70s nostalgia is finally turning up, mostly in hip city weeklies and Britain's *The Face*. Even the children of that decade have some problems waxing too warm about disco, much less the ugliest clothes ever worn by Western man. But the '70s generation resents the '60s relics. They got all the attention, and they're still hogging it.

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"our most important urban program, our best program for producing jobs and bringing people out of poverty." But Bush position papers on education contain no proposals to sustain the expectations he raises. At the elementary and secondary level, Bush proposes only higher academic standards, more parent involvement, and tougher principals. He has ideas only for those who make it to college level—but these consist merely of loans and tax exemptions for education savings accounts. For this Bush wants to be known as "the education president"? It's a title stolen from Walter Mondale, by the way.

During the Reagan years, America has developed or recognized pressing social problems that Bush can barely acknowledge, much less adequately address, because almost inevitably the solutions require new government spending. These problems include the need for adequate child care that would allow parents of all income levels to work, housing for the homeless and for low-income families, and measures to rescue the urban underclass. Bush favors voluntary day care by corporations, programs to let public housing tenants buy their apartments, and . . . education. Bush shows more concern than Reagan ever did, but concern is as far as he gets.

He is much more comfortable figuring out ways to help the people he knows. His energy program is detailed, and includes deregulating natural gas, repealing the windfall profits tax, and increasing the oil depletion allowance—all favors to the oil rich. His competitiveness strategy is to cut the capital gains tax, even though that would undermine tax reform, encourage new tax shelters, and reward those who invest in van Goghs as much as those who build new factories.

Bush's Chicago speech indicates that his general election political strategy is going to be another Reagan retread—to run against Jimmy Carter without naming him. "I mean to help our nation move forward and push on into the future," he said. "There's no going back, no hiding, no turning back to the policies of yesterday, the policies of failure. Out there—that's the future." Indeed, the future is out there. It is waiting to be seized by a Democrat who can offer a program of progressive change, of opportunity for those who haven't as well as those who have.

account funded by a mandatory $7-per-semester activities fee charged to all students. There was outrage, of course, when this was reported in the *Washington Post*, but the outrage missed the point. The real scandal is that *anybody*, raving loony or perfectly sane, idiot or full of wisdom, spewing hate or gushing love, gets $7,500 or anything like it for an hour's work, paid whether they like it or not by students who are struggling to meet their tuition bills. Yet state universities all over the country perpetuate this racket, with the collusion of professional speakers bureaus. Speaking fees are ludicrously inflated because in the two principal markets—business conventions and universities—the buyers are spending other people's money. Very often the per-audience-member cost is more than the most expensive Broadway play. Speakers, including prominent journalists, enjoy the easy income. Student-leader types enjoy the opportunity to network with grown-up big shots. Professors, meanwhile, who are not paid per lecture, must wonder where they went wrong.

□ DO THEY KNOW IT'S NOT CHRISTMAS?

Gifts to the White House pile up

—*USA Today*, March 11

Foreign Gifts to the Reagans Fell in '87

—*Washington Post*, same day

□ YOUR BID:

Strong Bidding Reported on Mexican Debt Swap

—*American Banker*, March 1

Bids on Debt Called Poor

—*New York Times*, same day

(thanks to Henry Erlich, New York, New York)

□ CORRECTION: "Postcard Haiti: Getting to Know the General" by Mark Hosenball (February 8) incorrectly reported U.S. military aid to Haiti at $100 million a year. In fact, total economic and military aid equaled about $100 million; military aid was only $1.5 million.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE PERILOUS TIMES OF ELIE WIESEL: " 'I love Israel,' Mr. Wiesel said. 'I say it because these days it is risky.' " —*New York Times*, March 14.

□ FARRAKHAN SPEAKS: The University of the District of Columbia, D.C.'s equivalent of a state university, spent $15,200 on a speech by the raving black nationalist Louis Farrakhan. Of that, $7,500 was Farrakhan's honorarium (bargained down from $10,000), $1,000 was for Farrakhan's expenses, and the rest was for security and miscellaneous costs. The money came from a $60,000 student events

POSTCARD PANAMA

YANKEE, COME HERE

Panama City

As Reagan administration officials try to work out just the right mix of sanctions and inducements to lure Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega off his perch, many Panamanians are puzzled. What's taking the Marines so long? As I write, Noriega is still in power, and invasion talk is practically sweeping the isthmus. Models under discussion include

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Grenada '83, Santo Domingo '65, and Achille Lauro '86. "They should abduct the guy," said Carmina Moreno, a grandmother in tennis shoes building a barricade the other day against riot police. Mrs. Moreno's husband is an importer of French perfumes. But even in humbler circles, the policy prescription is often the same. In San Miguelito, a sprawling low-income barrio east of the capital, the U.S. freeze on the flow of dollars to Panama has Nifma Patino struggling to make ends meet. "If the North Americans don't intervene we'll get even worse off," she says. As I turn to walk away, a young woman clutching her baby smiles and waves goodbye: "Tell them to come soon, please!"

It is the Americans who seem to be fretting that the mild measures already in place might be too tough. The fear is that sanctions, which are indeed crippling the economy, might set off an anti-American backlash—just what Noriega has been trying to do. That may indeed happen among the Panama Defense Forces, who have a tendency to circle the wagons around their *jefe*. But on the street level, the idea seems pretty farfetched. On the whole, Panamanians want the United States to bag the general, and then turn the dollar spigot back on. What gives? How come the empire shies from the Big Stick, while the erstwhile neocolony clamors for it?

LOOK AT it from a Panamanian point of view. The United States created the Panama Defense Forces, building it up from a ragtag police force to a modern 16,000-man army able to defend the Canal. A good deal of that training went on during Noriega's tenure. The United States nurtured Noriega for years as an intelligence asset—even though it knew he was bullying his people, cozying up to the Cubans and the coke cartel, stealing elections, and sucking the Panamanian economy dry with payoffs for himself and his friends. The Panamanian people are a pacific lot, unarmed, and far more interested in pursuing the U.S. dollar—Panama's official currency—than watching Fidel Castro on armed forces television. Many Panamanians reason that it is up to the gringos to deal with the monster they created.

But whatever happened to national pride? Here, Noriega does have a point. Leaders of the business-led opposition, the Civic Crusade, concede privately that they would rather see the Marines come than see their own profits hit by economic sanctions. On March 11, while their rank and file were getting maced by Noriega's "Doberman" riot police, some of the leaders of the movement were off inaugurating a gala trade fair called Expocomer '88 at the Atlapa Convention Center (the scene a few weeks earlier of Noriega's own Brobdingnagian birthday party).

In Noriega's camp there is also bewilderment about the way the Yankees are acting lately—bewilderment that is said to reach right up to the general himself. The word is that he simply doesn't understand why his friends are so mad at him all of a sudden—and, at least until very recently, still harbored hopes of patching things up somehow. Capt. Julio Antonio Lopez, a Doberman who has been attending regular barracks "seminars" on anti-imperialism, patriotism, etc., says plaintively: "The American people have never had a better ally than the Panamanian people. They have never had a better ally than General Noriega."

The real reason Noriega's nationalist campaign is going nowhere is that there is no clear break between Panamanian identity and American identity. Panama was born with the American empire, as Panamanians who wanted independence from Colombia hitched on to the canal-building Americans. And throughout the American Century, Panamanian growth and prosperity has been tied to the military and economic power of the United States. A busy Canal means a prosperous Panama. (Indeed, the Canal was busiest during World War II and Vietnam.) Even today over ten percent of Panama's GNP comes from the Canal and the presence of U.S. forces. This has given rise to a political culture and national identity deeply attached to the United States. It is more than goodwill toward the United States, more than a love affair with U.S. dollars, culture, and language. It is something like loyalty—dual loyalty. "I feel like an American citizen, even though I'm not," a politically independent stereo importer said as he invited me in for coffee. But as the talk turned to Noriega, he began to strike a different tone. His business was already gasping for air, but he was nevertheless prepared for any sanctions the United States wanted to dish out: "I want to stand here and fight. This is my country." For a Panamanian, there's no contradiction.

NO WONDER they can't believe the rescue force hasn't shown up yet. It only goes to show that political culture lags behind economic and geopolitical reality. Not everyone in Panama has noticed, but the colossus of the North ain't so colossal any more. The Sandinistas are still around after seven years of the *contras*, when 25 years ago the Americans might have just skipped the guerrilla middleman and taken the regime out on its own. The current division and hesitation in Washington over what to do in Panama shows that the United States, even under Ronald Reagan, must take into account the views of other countries in the region, and lacks clear political will of its own. And that power shortage has let Noriega hang on, or at least entertain hopes of riding out the storm. Will Panama, child of the wild-oats phase of America's imperial career, wind up as a case study in imperial Alzheimer's?

The Panamanians just might have to save themselves. Noriega's overthrow, if accomplished peacefully by a broad coalition of civilian protesters without more direct U.S. intervention, would be an important act of real independence. Then again, the anti-Noriega forces could always look for outside help somewhere else, starting with the country that is now both Panama's biggest trading partner and the No. 1 user of the Canal: Japan.

CHARLES LANE

Charles Lane covers Central America for *Newsweek*.

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CAMPAIGN '88

JESSE'S WORDS

WHEN JESSE JACKSON hits cruising speed in his stump speech, he delivers a list of what has "crashed" in America during the Reagan era. It's a lot more than the stock market, Jackson insists. Factory jobs and homebuilders "crashed" and so did the Equal Rights Amendment and "parity" for women. "Scholarships for our youth crashed," he says. "Day care, too, has crashed. Head Start crashed."

It's one of the most dazzling parts of Jackson's standard speech. The problem is, much of it isn't true. Scholarships haven't crashed—far from it. In 1980 all grants and fellowships from the U.S. Department of Education totaled $3.6 billion. By 1988 the total had risen to $5.7 billion, a 58 percent increase that far exceeds the rate of inflation. For 1989 the projected figure is $6.2 billion.

Jackson is also dead wrong about day care and Head Start. Day care for children has grown in all forms—public, company-run, private-for-profit—in the 1980s. And now the Reagan administration and virtually every presidential candidate, Democrat and Republican, are calling for more day care. Head Start, the federal program to prepare poor children for elementary school, has expanded, with President Reagan's support. In 1980 the program cost $735 million and had 376,300 kids enrolled. In 1988 spending had risen to $1.3 billion and the enrollment to 453,963.

On NBC's "Meet the Press" on March 13, I asked Jackson to justify his claim that Head Start "crashed." He only made matters worse. "The fact is this administration is spending less on a combination of prenatal care, Head Start, and day care," he said. "The reality is we have more children in poverty. . . . My point is it makes more moral and economic sense to invest in Head Start and day care on the front side of life rather than jail care and welfare on the back side. There has been a cut in funding for the poor."

True, there have been some cuts, notably the elimination of the CETA public jobs program. But funding for prenatal and day care, like funding for Head Start, has increased dramatically during the Reagan years. The chief prenatal program is called Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Reagan initially tried to slash WIC, but Congress balked. As a result, WIC spending has jumped from $725 million in 1980 to an estimated $1.8 billion in 1988. On day care the tax credit has tripled in the 1980s, from $900 million in lost tax revenues in 1981 to $2.7 billion in 1987. Direct federal spending on child care has fallen slightly. The social services block grant for day care dropped from $2.9 billion in 1980 to $2.7 billion in 1987, but this is offset by modest hikes in other day-care programs and increased spending by state governments. In any case, the overall bite on the federal treasury for day care has gone up substantially in the Reagan era.

False and misleading statements are common in Jackson's stump speech. And there are other problems. Some of his positions are contradictory. Some of his comments are confused or completely wrongheaded. Some are just plain gibberish. And though Jackson has delivered his stump speech hundreds of times during the campaign, his words have gone practically unexamined. Instead he is frequently praised for the high level of his oratory.

The other candidates for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination can hardly be blamed for giving Jackson a free ride. They have nothing to gain from criticizing his statements. They probably wouldn't be able to lure Jackson supporters from him anyway. And they might come off as negative and mean-spirited, or be called racist. The press, too, has had an excuse—that Jackson didn't have a serious shot at winning the nomination. Now, after his strong showing on Super Tuesday and in the Illinois primary, that excuse is gone.

I EXAMINED the version of Jackson's stump speech published by the *New York Times*. The *Times* called it Jackson's "basic speech" and said, "It summarizes, with little variation from one occasion to the next, how the candidate wants to present himself to the voters."

Jackson presents himself as knowledgeable on economics. But he gets basic economic facts wrong. He claims that "slave labor abroad" is used to "undercut organized labor at home." The biggest exporter to the United States he cites is South Korea. Workers there, he says, "don't have the right to vote, can't organize trade unions, can't demonstrate legally." He's wrong on all three counts. Workers voted last year in a presidential election in South Korea. Even the AFL-CIO concedes that labor unions are legal in South Korea, though hardly powerful. And demonstrations happen to be lawful.

On "Meet the Press," Jackson backpedaled. He said he really meant "cheap labor" or "oppressed labor." The United States "should fight to tie in labor rights with human rights," he said. "When their workers make livable wages, it destroys the incentive to take our workers' jobs. And when they make livable wages, they can buy what we produce, which evens the playing field for the American worker." Fine. But if raising Koreans' wages succeeds in bringing jobs back to America, the effect in Korea will not be workers with higher wages. It will be workers with no jobs. Jackson has advocated a ban on imports from countries like South Korea. This would hardly improve the lives of Korean workers.

Jackson has some funny ideas about capital, jobs, taxes, and farmers. He says "our capital" is being shipped overseas by corporations that shut down American factories and open foreign ones to get cheaper labor. "Your jobs went to South Korea and Taiwan and South Africa and Chile," he says. In truth, there's a net inflow of capital to this country. It's the mirror image of our trade deficit. Foreigners can't invest enough here. They are creating far more jobs in the United States than we are sending overseas. Thanks in part to foreign capital, the number of jobs has grown from 101 million in 1980 to 114 million in 1987.

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Jackson has an answer for this, an inaccurate or at least an outdated and misleading answer. "Let's analyze this situation," he says in his stump speech. "In the last seven years under Reagan, 11 million new jobs. Six million pay $7,000 a year or less." That 11 million figure is wrong, and his assertion that more than half are low-paying jobs is deceptive. His claim is apparently based on a Joint Economic Committee study of jobs from 1979 to 1984. But even in that study, which encompassed two recessions, a majority of the low-paying jobs were part-time or seasonal. More recent figures compiled by Marvin Kosters of the American Enterprise Institute show that only 13 percent of all jobs created between 1979 and 1986 paid less than $6,700 a year. This represents a sharp decline in the share of new jobs that are low-paying, the direct opposite of what Jackson claims.

Jackson argues that the tax code is rigged to reward companies for sending jobs abroad. "They close down a plant in America, they get a tax break. They take a job to South Korea, they get another tax break." He's half-right about this. He's wrong about the tax break for closing a factory here. I don't know of any tax windfall for this, and neither does Robert McIntyre of Citizens for Tax Justice, who is an authority on tax breaks for business. But there are tax advantages to generating profits overseas rather than here.

TO NARROW the deficit, Jackson wants to raise taxes, but his discussion of this is clumsy at best. He says $10 billion could be picked up by raising the estate tax, and he's right. Then he says, "If those who are making $250,000 a year or more pay at the 30 percent level rather than 25 percent, that's another $24 billion." Not quite. What I think he's talking about is the 33 percent rate that applies to income between $190,000 and $240,000, which then drops back to 28 percent. OK, so apply the 33 percent rate to income over $240,000. What you get is $10 billion more in tax revenue annually, not $24 billion.

In his speech Jackson treats farmers as an oppressed minority. "Stop closing down American farms and importing the food," he says. This is nonsense. Farms are closing down because we have too much food. The problem is overproduction, not imports. The Reagan administration "drove down prices for farmers," he says. Actually world agricultural overproduction is the main cause of lower prices. All farmers want, he goes on, are "fair prices, supply management, restructuring of debt, and the return of their land."

What farmers really want is higher prices, fair or not. Jackson doesn't seem to realize that this means higher food prices for the poor, precisely the folks he's trying to help. The "supply management" envisioned in the Harkin-Gephardt farm bill, which Jackson has endorsed, would ensure that by turning farmers into a cartel. The debt incurred and land lost by farmers was mostly the result of speculation in the 1970s and early 1980s. Why should farmers be singled out for relief? The shareholders who lost money in the stock market crash last October have an equally justified (or unjustified) claim. Why shouldn't they be reimbursed for lost equity?

Jackson isn't any better with numbers when he talks about military spending. He says he would "cut Midgetman missiles" and save $45 billion. The Congressional Research Service says the best estimate of the cost of building the Midgetman system is $36 billion. Jackson says he would cut out two additional aircraft carriers sought by the administration, saving $40 billion. CRS says two new carriers would cost only $6.4 billion. I'll give Jackson the benefit of the doubt and assume he was referring to two entire battle groups, each with a carrier, two cruisers, four destroyers, two attack submarines, an oiler, and helicopters. Still, the bill comes to less than $30 billion.

In the same breath Jackson says, "You would wipe out poverty for every woman, infant, and child for $36 billion. I choose to wipe out poverty for every woman, infant, and child rather than two [aircraft carrier] systems we do not need." Jackson is probably correct that $36 billion would be enough to lift every poor person above the poverty line for a year. But you would have to do the same every year. And you can only kill the two new carriers once.

Jackson occasionally gets so carried away with his rhetoric that he becomes incoherent. He sounds great, but his words don't make sense. "Right now Congress can merge and then purge workers and then submerge the economy," he says. "A process called merging, purging, and submerging. Merge corporations, leveraged buy-outs, paper wealth, purge workers, and submerge our economy. That must shift." I think I get the drift. My assumption is he's declaring his opposition to corporate mergers, but maybe not. You figure it out.

My favorite Jacksonism is on the subject of shipbuilding. On his list of what's "crashed" in America, he includes "shipbuilders." They haven't, but that's beside the point. The one thing that keeps the shipbuilding industry afloat is the Defense Department's quest for a 600-ship Navy. Jackson would abandon that quest, killing the two new carriers and their escort ships. Now if that happens, shipbuilders really will crash.

FRED BARNES

The harmonic convergence of sleaze.

ONE BIG SCANDAL

BETWEEN MEETINGS and phone conversations with takeover artists, Latin American finance ministers, and his battery of high-priced criminal lawyers, financial wizard Michael Milken took time out last spring to entertain an unusual visitor at the Beverly Hills office of Drexel Burnham Lambert. Jerry Nims, newly appointed president of the PTL television ministry, had flown to the Coast with

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a bizarre proposal for rescuing the foundering evangelical organization from bankruptcy.

Nims's idea—a junk bond bailout of PTL—was warmly received by Milken and his legion of MBAs as they pored over the chaotic accounts Nims had inherited from Jim and Tammy Bakker. One participant in the meeting recalled that Milken welcomed this opportunity for Drexel to prove once again that it was at the cutting edge of financial innovation. Nims returned to his office at Heritage USA, the Bakkers' Christian Disneyland, with heart uplifted.

Sadly, Michael Milken will never know if Wall Street was ready to buy junk bonds for Jesus. Before a refinancing package could be put together, PTL, groaning under the weight of Jim and Tammy's profligacy, was forced into Chapter XI. Nonetheless, the unlikely flirtation between Nims (who later left PTL to become president of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority) and Milken (who remains a target of a massive insider-trading probe touched off by the confessions of Ivan Boesky) holds explosive implications that stretch far beyond the fortunes of any of the participants. According to our own independent investigation, this is one more piece of evidence that, no matter how seemingly unrelated, there are astonishing ties that bind virtually every major scandal that has convulsed the nation over the past 18 months.

FROM WALL STREET insider trading to PTL to Wedtech, from Jimmy Swaggart to Jessica Hahn to Edwin Meese, from Oliver North to Adnan Khashoggi to Ferdinand Marcos, from Iranamok to the sordid Panamanian drug peddler Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, each and every one can be linked to the other, forging a Cosmic Chain of Corruption that dwarfs even the most convoluted conspiracies postulated by Lyndon LaRouche (who, as we shall see, plays a cameo role in this global scenario himself). Indeed, a brief examination of the activities of Noriega alone validates this hypothesis: according to sworn congressional testimony, the Latin strongman worked simultaneously for the CIA, Fidel Castro, Colombian cocaine barons, and Lieutenant Colonel North.

Paranoids would conclude that these events were all orchestrated by some sinister force, such as Satan, the Kremlin, or Henry Kissinger and the Council on Foreign Relations. Indeed, the Christic Institute has attracted widespread attention for its allegation that a secret squad of CIA-controlled arms dealers and drug peddlers has been manipulating American foreign policy and spawning worldwide mayhem since the Vietnam War. We have our own theory. Perhaps the organizers of last summer's Harmonic Convergence—a celebration of the supposed confluence of events foretold by Mayan cosmology—were onto something after all. Taking their lead from the writings of archaeologist Jose Arguelles, proponents argued that as the planet passed through a critical astronomical cycle, a global demonstration of hand-holding and humming would harness great galactic beams of psychic energy for the goodwill of mankind. We believe the beams had an unintended effect: instead of producing an era of brotherhood and good feeling, they brought on an epoch of bad karma—a giant harmonic convergence of sleaze.

Too sweeping, you say? Consider some of the following evidence, which appears to have been buried amid the daily torrent of revelations.

LAST SUMMER sultry Long Island brunette Jessica Hahn of PTL fame was called before a New York grand jury investigating the remarkable political influence of Wedtech, the Bronx tool and die shop that metamorphosed overnight into a multimillion-dollar defense contractor. The grand jury wanted to know the source of some of the $265,000 Hahn had received to keep silent about her 1980 sexual tryst with Jim Bakker. (This encounter, it should be noted, was first brought to light through the diligent efforts of pornography enthusiast Jimmy Swaggart.) It turns out that one of these Hahn payments—for $10,000 in 1985—came from a PTL board member named Aimee Cortese, who operated a storefront church in the Bronx that was simultaneously receiving generous contributions from Wedtech, allegedly to funnel bribes to her brother, Bronx Democratic Congressman Robert Garcia. Hence the grand jury's interest: Had the unsuspecting Hahn been paid off not by Bakker's PTL, but with misdirected Wedtech bribes intended to buy the influence of a U.S. congressman?

It is through the Wedtech connection that the tribulations of the televangelists lead us directly to that industrious Washington influence-peddler, E. Robert Wallach. Having received up to $1 million in stock and cash from Wedtech, Wallach scored his most impressive coup in 1982 when his old law school chum Edwin Meese, then White House counselor, intervened to help land Wedtech a $32 million Army contract. Can it be purely coincidence that the very same Wallach later recruited his good buddy Ed for help with another business deal he was involved in—a scheme conceived by Swiss-Israeli businessman Bruce Rappaport to build a billion-dollar pipeline from Iraq to the Gulf of 'Aqaba, a project that allegedly was to be greased through payoffs to Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres's Labor Party? Meese's artful persuasion on the pipeline scheme helped win the support of confessed obfuscator Robert (Bud) McFarlane, then national security adviser, who, it has since been reported, saw the deal as a means to balance the possible advantages to Iran from the secret arms-for-hostage deals that were being engineered by McFarlane and his deputy, Ollie North.

From President Reagan and Vice President George Bush on down the line, it is hard to find any high government official who was not tainted in some fashion by the machinations of McFarlane, North, and their motley crew of conspirators. What is striking is how frequently the players keep popping up in the oddest places. Consider, for example, the activities of that character actor in the Iranamok melodrama, Adnan Khashoggi, the peripatetic Saudi arms dealer who, together with his close associate (and

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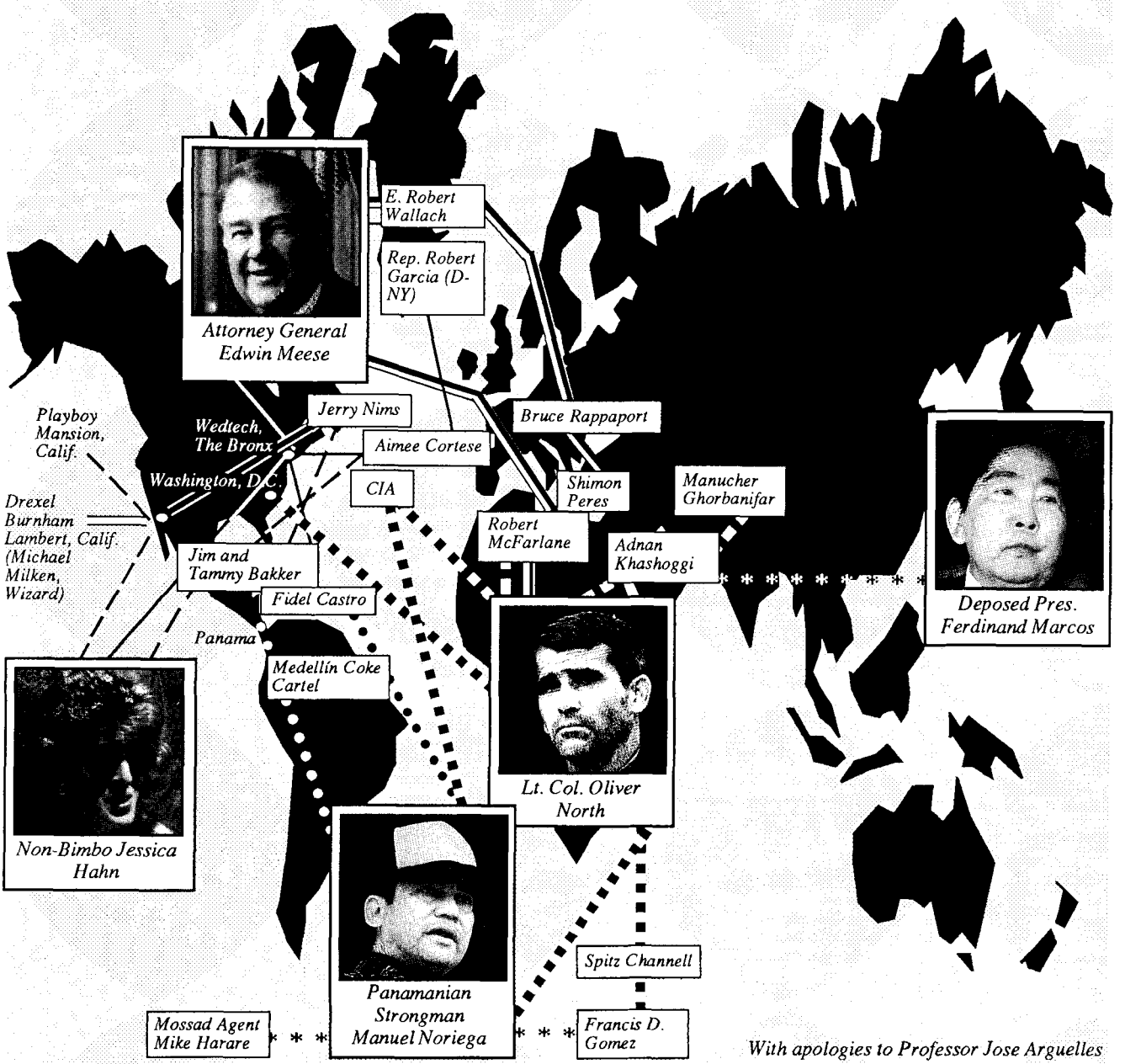
The Harmonic Convergence of International Sleaze



Above: The Hosenball-Isikoff theory of the Harmonic Convergence of International Sleaze. Cf. Erich Von Daniken, Mark Lane, Lyndon LaRouche, Robert Welch, The Christic Institute, and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*

Chart by Dan Halberstein

Legend:

- Insider-Trading Scandal
- International Drug-Trafficking Scandal
- Iranamok Scandal
- Pipeline Scandal
- PTL Scandal
- Wedtech Scandal
- * * * * * * Other

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alleged triple agent) Manucher Ghorbanifar, helped finance the U.S. and Israeli shipments of arms to Iran. It has recently emerged that, at the very time he was helping to bankroll the Ayatollah's army, Khashoggi was working diligently to assist another of the world's great statesmen, Ferdinand Marcos. A federal grand jury in New York is now investigating whether Ferdinand and wife Imelda fraudulently tried to transfer their hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of Manhattan real estate (along with several Old Master paintings) to Khashoggi to keep it out of the grasping hands of the democratically elected Philippine government of Corazon Aquino.

AND THEN there is the extracurricular lobbying of Francis D. Gomez, co-proprietor with Richard Miller of International Business Communications, the Washington public relations firm that Oliver North used to funnel the proceeds of Carl "Spitz" Channell's fund-raising appeals to their intended recipients in the Honduran jungle. Recently discovered Justice Department documents show that at the same time Gomez was serving as Ollie's *contra* conduit, he was also serving as a $21,000 per month Washington representative of Impulso Turístico y Financiero, an organization that performed chores for the Embassy of Panama, authorized representatives of the archfiend himself, General Noriega.

Indeed, no panorama of scandal would be complete without close study of Noriega's hemispheric malfeasance. According to recent news reports and testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Noriega, while serving as a $200,000-a-year consultant to the CIA, plotted with North and Richard Secord to support the Nicaraguan *contras* in violation of the Boland amendment, while supplying weapons to Colombia's left-wing M-19 terrorists, who are aligned with the Medellín cocaine cartel. It therefore came as no surprise when the *Miami Herald* disclosed that one of Noriega's closest confidants is a shadowy Israeli businessman and former Mossad agent named Mike Harare, who once headed an assassination team that hunted down Palestinian terrorists throughout Europe in the 1970s.

If any doubts remain that these events are guided by a cosmic convergence of negativity, they should be dispelled by the words of one of the Panamanian generalissimo's few remaining supporters on earth. We speak, of course, of Lyndon LaRouche, that world-renowned political theorist and accused credit card swindler whose vast private intelligence network has been sustained by Noriega's financial contributions. Panama's dictator is a "brilliant man" and "one of the best anti-drug fighters on the continent," says LaRouche, the only presidential candidate of either party to argue that the real drug culprit is Elizabeth II, Queen of England.

MARK HOSENBALL AND MICHAEL ISIKOFF

Mark Hosenball and Michael Isikoff wrote "The Swami of Iranamok" for TNR's November 9, 1987, issue.

Alvin Toffler in China.

DENG'S BIG BANG

IN 1983 it looked as if China's Politburo would adopt something out of American pop culture as a new ideology. Confucius, Marx, and Mao bowed out. Alvin Toffler moved in. When the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences invited the "future shock" sociologist to lecture on his American best seller *The Third Wave*, audiences in Beijing and Shanghai listened to him as if he were an oracle. Premier Zhao Ziyang had the book translated for a restricted readership. When some hard-liners attacked and suppressed it as "spiritual pollution," Zhao called a meeting of 100 prominent scientists and Party leaders to resolve the issue. The book won. *The Third Wave* soon became the best-selling book in China, after Deng Xiaoping's collected speeches. These days, Mao's Little Red Book is a little read book.

The year before, Zhao had turned an underground political party of student economists into several think tanks directly accountable to the secretariat, the Party's highest administrative unit. Unlike the students who rocked the country with demonstrations last winter, these are dissidents from within. Zhou needs them in order to get around a monstrous bureaucracy and a rigid state doctrine, and he protects them from the periodic anti-reform purges. Some go so far as to say that "China's reform has been carried out not by the official government but by a 'shadow government.' " These young intellectuals call *The Third Wave* their bible.

Besides Toffler, this influential group has taken for its gurus sociologist Daniel Bell and Nobel Prize-winning Belgian physicist Ilya Prigogine. (*The Third Wave* popularized Prigogine and Bell.) What these thinkers share, and what makes them peculiarly attractive to China's reformers, is a theory of social change that uses the language of science rather than politics. Thus market-oriented modernization can be justified without invoking Western political ideology. And the message to this still-backward country is that modernization no longer means painful industrialization. The aborted dream of a "great leap forward" now means leaping not to industry, but beyond it.

Prigogine's theory of "dissipative structures" offers a physicist's recipe for an abrupt catch-up through the use of information technology. Bell's idea of the postindustrial society shelves China's old industrial failures in favor of a new start. Toffler assures the reformers that it's OK for Third Wavers to skip the Second Wave (industrialization), and to be making apparently only First Wave (agricultural) progress. The changes involved in the Third Wave, he says, "actually resemble First Wave conditions: dispersion of the population out of the cities; more work in the home; small-scale production; linking rural development to high technology." The experiment in China's countryside seems tailored to this postindustrial vision.

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The current obsession with science has a historical precedent. Today's leaders have reactivated the old debate that started in the 1920s between the Nationalists and the Communists about how best to modernize. Until the Cultural Revolution, the science in Marx was as important as the class struggle. Instead of telling the workers of the world to unite, Mao told them to unite "with the comparatively progressive material monists and natural scientists of the capitalist class." This early Mao would not be so out of place in today's reform: in the search for a new official philosophy, the main criterion is not that it be communist or capitalist, but that it have the status of science.

When the reformers propose new policies, they challenge the orthodoxy in the name of Western science—not Western political values. Early in the reform, for instance, an infamous ex-radical from the Cultural Revolution, Yang Xiaokai, published a book "on cybernetics." As he admits, he was no computer scientist: "I said we should guarantee the basic right of private property, but the only way for me to propose my idea was to decorate it with modern science—'cybernetics' or some math equations." One think tank member, He Weiling, suggests that "three theories: cybernetics, systems theory, and information theory" are used to mystify Party elders.

The man most responsible for the new scientism is Su Shaozhi, an enthusiast of Toffler, Bell, and Prigogine, who until 1987 was director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, founded in 1979. The institute is the reformers' answer to the old-fashioned propaganda department. Its job is not to uphold Marxism but to update it—as if, explains Ding Xueliang, an institute member on leave at Harvard, Europeans in the Middle Ages had set up a think tank on the Christian Church. But the actual process of implementing the reformers' vision begins in the Beijing Young Economist Society, which can make radical proposals, such as the opening of a stock market and the selling of stock in state enterprises, precisely because it is not an organ of the state, but an academic body. The group circulates internal documents of the proposals among top Party officials. Only then does its official counterpart, the Institute for Economic System Reform, publish the ideas in its journal, *China Reform*, and in the newspapers.

THE NECESSARY first step in the post-Mao reform was opening China to outside ideas, investment, and technology. As early as 1979 some young reformers lobbied for this new version of the "open door" in the language of modern physics, not of foreign policy. "I didn't mention class struggle," says Chen Ping, a reform intellectual who subsequently did his Ph.D. in physics under Prigogine. "I argued that if you have a closed system, you only have disorder. But once you open the system, energy and information come in. Then there is the possibility of change." As James Gleick explains in *Chaos: Making a New Science* (1987), the first book to chronicle the most recent "revolution" in physics, scientists have begun to abandon idealized closed models for such complex systems as the weather, epidemics, turbulence, the heart—and even economics. Though the reformers have latched on to Prigogine's newfangled terminology, the open/closed distinction is an old idea in physics—with obvious political connotations, useful for justifying economic liberalization.

This new "ideology" can be seen at work in Deng's policy in the countryside. The decollectivization of agriculture was spearheaded by the think tanks' predecessor, the underground group of student economists of the late '70s. Now the Institute for Economic System Reform wants to push change further. In an influential book called roughly *Dynamics and Evolution of Economic Systems*, chosen to receive a national award, institute member He Weiling makes the case for developing rural enterprises, using Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures.

An example Prigogine uses to illustrate his theory of the emergence of "order out of chaos" is the construction of a termites' nest. Like most phenomena modeled by chaos scientists, the architecture of the nest is enormously complex; the rules for its construction, simple. The termites randomly move lumps of earth around, but tag them with a hormone that attracts other termites. Prigogine calls the inevitable concentration of lumps at various points "fluctuation." These clumps may become the "pillars" of an emerging nest. "Depending on whether the size of the initial fluctuating region lies below or above some critical value," he writes, "the fluctuation either regresses or else spreads to the whole system." Fluctuation, critical point—and a new structure has the chance to emerge.

The termites' nest is a powerful metaphor for remaking the modern Chinese economy. The "critical point" means that a new order emerges suddenly, like the abrupt emergence of an arch of earth in the termites' nest. More important, the system is self-organizing, without a master builder directing the worker insects, or the workers: an "invisible hand" without embarrassing recourse to Adam Smith. The principle is non-equilibrium as a source of order, explains Cui Zhiyuan, who at 24 is the youngest member of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Rural enterprises survive only if their products find a market in the cities. "Fluctuation" refers to the continual start-up and breakdown of those enterprises. "Critical point" represents the market share necessary for survival. The complexity occurs because in an underdeveloped country the enterprise must create its own demand. The task of the reformers, in their terms, is to exploit far-from-equilibrium conditions (high fluctuation) that could allow the system to jump to a more highly organized (hence "dissipative" or higher-energy) structure.

THUS what Western economists see as a powerful new mathematical tool the reformers consider a potential social paradigm. It avoids the equilibrium preoccupation of neoclassical economics and gives reformers a new language of change they desperately need. It introduces probability—that is, spontaneity in human affairs and history—into the old determinism of state planning.

This is a clue to the meaning of Zhou's keynote an-

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nouncement at November's 13th Party Congress that China will be in a "primary stage of socialism" until at least the year 2050. This now-ubiquitous formula, the fullest official philosophy offered to justify the post-Mao reform, was coined by Third Waver Su Shaozhi several years ago and included in Zhao's speech by the young reformers. *Time* called it "a nod to conservatives." Yet it's better understood as a way to beat the conservatives at their own game. The reformers adopt the tenor of Marxist science—which the conservatives recognize—but they have abandoned its determinism. No more five-year plans. "What final pattern the system will have no one can predict," says He Weiling. The reformers have dumped dialectical materialism for non-linear dynamics. "The path to the future is not unique," explains Chen Ping. "Unpredictability does not mean powerlessness, but opportunity."

None of this means that significant political liberalization is inevitable. Even some reformers have begun to attack *The Third Wave*. Like Marx, they say, it offers not pluralism but quasi-scientific solutions to social problems. And the Third Wavers, who are "bad in science, good in public relations," are sometimes called "science worshipers," an epithet from the '30s. Despite the drama of reform, this scientism in the political culture looks much as it did early in the century. "Three things," as Ding Xueliang puts it, "have served the same ideological function in the Chinese mind: Confucianism, Marxism-Leninism, and Science." Until that changes, pluralism in China will remain elusive.

ANDREW MENDELSOHN

Justice and the 'preppy murder.'

INSULT TO INJURY

THE NEW YORK TABLOIDS call it the "Preppy Murder Case." Robert Chambers, a well-to-do young man, is accused of murdering Jessica Levin, an attractive, equally well-off young woman, in Central Park after an evening of drinking at a bar that allegedly caters to gilded underage partiers. Chambers claims that he killed the girl accidentally when she indulged her taste for "rough sex" by painfully squeezing his testicles. This defense has generated a storm of public hostility. Chambers, his lawyers, and the court system, protesters say, are perverting the judicial process—not defending the accused, but maligning the victim.

As a teacher of criminal law and a former prosecutor, I get frequent calls from journalists whenever a case of this sort hits the front pages. Is there a trend toward courtroom attacks on victims and witnesses? Why is this sort of thing allowed? Isn't it an outrage that after taking a victim's life, a killer gets to compound the crime by murdering her character as well?

In fact, issues relating to the character of the alleged victim are often essential to determining guilt or innocence in homicide and assault cases. Assaultive crimes often involve escalating verbal and physical confrontations, or slow buildups of grievances in difficult relationships. Put another way, people generally kill for a reason. Some reasons—such as self-defense against deadly attacks—constitute legal defenses. Others—such as extreme emotional distress brought on by threatening but non-deadly attack—may mitigate guilt. The sometimes difficult process of determining exactly what happened and why, when the accused claims that the reason for the killing partially or totally excuses it, is exactly what trials are for.

To take a concrete and less emotionally charged example, if Jones shoots Smith in a barroom fight, Jones may claim that he believed Smith had pulled a knife, and that he fired in self-defense. Even if Smith had no knife, Jones might not be guilty if he reasonably believed he was facing deadly force. Evidence that Smith had a reputation as a violent man who always carried a weapon, and that Jones was aware of that reputation, would bear directly on a jury's judgment about whether Jones is guilty of murder or was innocently (if mistakenly) trying to defend himself against attack. The "attack on the victim's character" is essential.

This issue is entirely unrelated to the question of whether the courts place too much value on the constitutional rights of defendants. For example, unlike the exclusion of evidence obtained by unconstitutional police action, permitting evidence about the victim's character promotes the search for the truth about guilt or innocence. If Chambers's statement is true, he is not guilty of murder, and we cannot know for sure whether he is telling the truth until all relevant evidence is heard. However unlikely his story may seem, he is entitled to have a jury hear it. There is no conceivable way a judge or prosecutor can decide in advance that he is lying and therefore should not be allowed to present his defense.

SOME ATTACKS on the characters of victims are indeed gratuitous and abusive. Until recently the rules of evidence permitted a rape defendant to elicit evidence of the "unchastity" of the complaining witness. Such evidence ostensibly was permitted on the theory that if intercourse had occurred, a sexually experienced woman was more likely to have consented. This rule has been reversed in most jurisdictions, for several good reasons. It was never logical to assume that a woman who had agreed to have sex with one man on one occasion was accordingly more likely to have consented to have sex with a different man on another occasion. Whatever slight logic there may have been to that inference when society expected women to be virginal until marriage and faithful afterward was vitiated in an era of greater sexual freedom. Most important, allowing such evidence deterred victims from pressing charges and, where charges were brought, permitted courts and juries to fail to protect women who, because of their lack of "virtue," were regarded by many as not worth protecting.

It is thus important to distinguish between relevant and

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irrelevant attacks on the victim's character. In the barroom fight discussed above, evidence that Jones knew Smith had a reputation for violence is critical in assessing the reasonableness of Jones's claim of self-defense. Evidence that Smith was a drug dealer and pornographer, by contrast, would be a gratuitous attack, calculated only to persuade the jury to acquit because the victim deserved his fate. Similarly, evidence that Levin made a habit of the sort of sexual practice Chambers said provoked him to lash out might be critical to the credibility of a story that might otherwise seem preposterous. But evidence that the victim led a fast life that some jurors might disapprove of could justly be condemned as intended to prejudice rather than enlighten the fact finder. The law of evidence requires just such distinctions to be drawn and such balances to be made.

"BLAMING THE VICTIM" draws public outrage in some cases, but goes unnoticed in others. The reason is the stereotypes of criminal behavior that lead the public to prejudge criminal cases—the stereotypes a fair trial is supposed to overcome. Compare the Chambers case with three other widely publicized criminal cases: Bernhard Goetz, the Howard Beach rioters, and Cheryl Pierson.

Goetz claimed that he was being robbed by four black teenagers in a subway car. The Howard Beach defendants said they were provoked into a fight by armed black hoodlums. Pierson—who hired a friend to kill her father—said that her father had sexually abused her for years. Like Chambers, each made serious accusations against their alleged victims, yet the public reaction differed widely. Chambers and his attorney have been vilified for defaming an innocent girl. Goetz became a controversial figure, hero to some and vigilante to others, but his lawyer's strategy of becoming the "prosecutor" of the alleged victims was generally accepted as legitimate. The Howard Beach defendants were widely assumed to be guilty and criticized in some quarters for their courtroom attacks on the victims. And Pierson was treated by the press as a victim—no one except her father's family had any objection to her attack on his character.

Why? Simple. The prosecution's version of the Chambers case fits easily into a set of stereotypes we all carry around with us. A young man who has been drinking becomes violent while trying to obtain sex from a girlfriend: that's something we've all heard of before, something that fits our preconceptions of what men and women are like. Chambers's version of the story—the girl all but forcing herself on a relatively unwilling man, and then engaging in sadistic acts—may fit some pornographic fantasy but is outside most of our assumptions about male and female behavior. Before any of the evidence comes in, most of us think we know what happened. Chambers has been prejudged by the public, so his defense appears to be a guilty person's effort to get off by smearing his victim.

Cheryl Pierson's story, on the other hand, accords with our stereotypes. The story fits, as Chambers's does not, with our assumption about who usually initiates and who resists sexual encounters. Before we hear any of the evidence—and remember, most of us who learn about these cases only through the news media know few details about what happened—we are prepared to believe this defense. So the outcry about "blaming the victim" does not arise.

The racial cases—Goetz and Howard Beach—provide another interesting contrast. Goetz's story fits the stereotype held by most white Americans about urban crime—young black men robbing a white. Whatever one thinks about Goetz's culpability, his version of the basic facts strikes a chord with most whites and with many blacks. Long before most of the evidence was known, most people, even those who condemned Goetz's reaction, were prepared to believe that his victims were young toughs up to no good. Accordingly, his attorney's bitter courtroom attacks on the victims were treated as legitimate even by most of those who thought he should have been convicted.

In Howard Beach, on the other hand, the same stereotyped view of black urban crime made less public headway, because it ran up against a counterimage that had broad acceptance even in the white community: the lynch mob. Whites who saw Goetz as Everyman could assimilate the Howard Beach youths to an image of racial violence by working-class whites that made the prosecution's version of what occurred intuitively likely. While the public generally condemned them, however, at least in the white community there was relatively little inclination to condemn their lawyers' attacks on the victims' characters. Unlike Jessica Levin and Cheryl Pierson, the black victims in Howard Beach did not fit a stereotype of innocence, even if their attackers did fit a stereotype of guilt.

In referring to these images as "stereotypes," I do not want to dismiss them as irrational. After all, when the jury comes to assess all of the evidence, it probably will have to resort to very similar stock images of human behavior. Crimes of violence do not usually occur before the video cameras. With fragmentary evidence the criminal justice process must try to reconstruct what happened. We know only a few things for certain: whose fingerprints were found where, what the gunshot wounds look like, where the body was found.

THE PROSECUTOR and the defense counsel try to marshal this evidence into a story that people of common sense, applying their wisdom and experience, will decide constitutes the best account of that evidence. (In our system the defense version only has to be plausible enough to raise a reasonable doubt whether the prosecution's version is true.) Stories that reinforce widely held general images of how people behave—stereotypes, if you will—are, for good reason, more likely to be accepted as reasonable than ones that do not. But only after the jury considers the hard evidence, the small particulars of the events at issue in the case being tried, and only if the full record is carefully studied will it be possible to decide whether a defense that may seem bizarre (like Chambers's), or persuasive (like Pierson's), really fits the evidence.

The point is that most of our rules of evidence and procedure have some basis in common sense. Of course

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defendants in criminal trials for violent acts often blame the victim, and in most cases they do so to save their own skins. In some cases, moreover, rules designed to prevent abuse of this practice are poorly applied, and victims are mistreated. But sometimes the "victim" really was to blame. There simply is no way of deciding, before a trial, whether a defendant's claim that he or she is not a murderer but a robbery victim or an abused spouse is merely "character assassination." Efforts to prejudge such cases based on press accounts are likely to be based on just what the word implies: prejudice.

GERARD E. LYNCH

Gerard E. Lynch is professor of law at Columbia University.

Masters and Johnson's recipe for hysteria.

THE AIDS COOKBOOK

BY MICHAEL FUMENTO

AIDS is called a syndrome because, rather than killing directly, it devastates the immune system and allows opportunistic infections to do the killing indirectly. Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia and fungi choke off the lungs, Kaposi's sarcoma rots the skin and other organs, cytomegalovirus eats away at the retina of the eyes. Almost seven years after the first news stories on AIDS started trickling in, most Americans are vaguely familiar with these symptoms, yet they remain ignorant of another aspect of the epidemic: opportunistic infection of the AIDS literary scene.

In a way, AIDS books are like diet books: there's always a market for them and most of them are fairly worthless. The letters A-I-D-S in the title are usually written much larger or in a different color so they can be read from the other end of the store. Endnotes and bibliographies are in short supply. Credentials also seem to be lacking among the authors. Often the writers are medical doctors, but their expertise virtually never has anything to do with epidemiology or etiology, which means they're not necessarily qualified to write about AIDS any more than a football player is to comment on hockey or handball. The doctors with expertise in AIDS are too busy fighting it to publish in popular journals, leaving it up to journalists to report their findings, fairly or otherwise.

Some of these opportunistic forays are innocuous. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross has parlayed her credentials as an observer of the dying into a book on observing dying AIDS victims. Others have been devastatingly misleading, such as Gene Antonio's *The AIDS Cover-up?*, which in defiance of Public Health Service officials pushes the case for casual transmission, using such logic as: in sheep there is a lentivirus (a virus that incubates over a very long period of time) that is transmitted by coughing; AIDS is caused by a lentivirus (human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV); therefore, the AIDS virus may be transmissible by coughing. This is as logical as saying that a rocket and an ambulance could be propelled by similar means since both are white machines. Nevertheless, despite tremendous sales of the book (200,000, according to the publicist at St. Ignatius Press), its impact has been limited mostly to conservatives in search of a new conspiracy theory.

The literary opportunistic infection to be feared the most is that spread by two people as famous as Kubler-Ross and as irresponsible as Antonio. Masters and Johnson's new book, calmly titled *Crisis: Heterosexual Behavior in the Age of AIDS*, written with Dr. Robert C. Kolodny, is a classic of the terror genre. It no doubt makes sense to many that Dr. William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, famous exclusively for their studies in human sexual behavior, would know a lot about sexual transmission of AIDS. That their experience is limited primarily to making men's penises erect and curing frigidity is perhaps a lost point.

Recently a number of articles have challenged the notion—popularized by the media—that AIDS is either about to "explode" into the heterosexual population or that, indeed, it already has. The latest statistics compiled in the Department of Health and Human Services report "Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infections in the United States" and from mandatory premarital testing programs have provided further support for the thesis that HIV continues to remain virtually confined to the same degree to the traditional risk groups: male homosexuals, i.v.-drug abusers, recipients of blood and blood products, sex partners of the above, and children infected in the womb. Even the surgeon general, C. Everett Koop—an early proponent of the "explosion" theory—now believes that none is going to take place, a view shared by virtually all public health authorities.

But just when you thought it was safe to get back in the

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bedroom, Masters and Johnson sound their hysterical klaxon: "AIDS is breaking out. The AIDS virus is now running rampant in the heterosexual community."

Now, this is alarming stuff even by the standards of AIDS sharks. The chairwoman for the American Foundation for AIDS Research, Mathilde Krim, and the New York commissioner of health, Dr. Stephen Joseph, both of whom previously overstated the threat of AIDS to heterosexuals, have blasted *Crisis*. Krim called a press conference to denounce it, and Joseph says the book seemed designed to create hysteria.

The foundation of cards upon which Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny base their thesis—everything else in the book appears to be pretty much padding—is a study of 400 men and 400 women from ages 21 to 40 who claimed to have had no homosexual relations and no history of i.v.-drug use. Two hundred of each sex claimed to have had sex with only one partner while the others averaged slightly more than ten partners each. Their blood tests resulted in an HIV positivity rate of 0.25 percent for the monogamous subjects, but among those with multiple partners, a whopping seven percent of women and five percent of men were positive.

FORTUNATELY, the only thing running rampant here is M & J's ignorance of survey research methodology. The mistakes lie at two ends: first, the survey sample and second, the information gathering. The sampling was grossly unscientific, on the order of high schoolers doing a class project. Subjects were recruited through childbirth classes, bulletin board announcements on university campuses, and fliers at singles bars and singles dances. Since the subjects all had to volunteer, the group was self-selected, which in and of itself destroys the purpose of measuring the general population. Finally, the selection of only four cities—New York, St. Louis, Atlanta, and Los Angeles—while perhaps convenient, was based on no scientific sampling technique.

Yet, with the sort of arrogance that permeates the book, M & J nonetheless criticize blood bank testing and military testing, both of which show substantially lower infection rates, as being skewed.

The sampling error alone is enough to disqualify the study, and indeed, at a press conference immediately before release of the book, Masters and Johnson were forced to admit that these findings in their test group could not be generalized to the population on a whole. Which raises the question: What good is it? The blood bank and military testing, though skewed toward those individuals inclined to give blood or to join the armed services, nonetheless consist of millions of individuals. Further, while they cannot be used as exact correlates of the general population (I would argue that blood bank donors do closely correlate with the non-homosexual, non-i.v.-drug using population while military testing overstates HIV prevalence), at least they can be compared with the previous year's figures for that same group, thus indicating if the prevalence rate is growing in these sub-populations and perhaps in the population as a whole. (Incidentally, they've shown no increase.) Thus, the M & J study serves no purpose at all, save, of course, to terrify.

EVEN IF THE sampling were proper, the interviewing procedure would disqualify the results. Most important, there was no follow-up interviewing of HIV-positives (seropositives). Instead, all sexual and drug-use histories were collected beforehand. Experience with follow-up interviews of seropositive individuals shows consistently that persons are often initially reluctant to admit to high-risk (male homosexual or needle-sharing) activity. Dr. Rand Stoneburner, chief of AIDS research at the New York Department of Health, reports that 60 percent of men in that city originally claiming prostitute contact as their only risk factor later change their stories, and that most of the remainder appear to be lying. The one HIV survey that is heavily cited by proponents of the "breakout" theory, conducted in Baltimore at a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) clinic, has the same flaw. That confidentiality was guaranteed in both Baltimore and the M & J cohort is of no consequence. The history of AIDS questionnaires suggests that even when respondents are promised foolproof anonymity, they still don't believe it. In fact, one reason the Public Health Service's plans for mass survey testing have bogged down is that up to one-third of those contacted said they didn't believe their replies would stay confidential.

Other than the Baltimore study, the M & J one is completely aberrational. For example, the sex researchers found that among their non-monogamous group, eight percent of the men from the New York area were seropositive. Yet an ongoing STD clinic study in New York City, measuring a group that one might expect to be at even higher risk than the M & J sample, has found only 1.2 percent of those men testing positive who claim no risk factors other than heterosexual intercourse. While non-monogamous women in the M & J study reported a slightly higher seropositive rate than the men (a 7-5 ratio), of actual heterosexually transmitted AIDS cases among native-born Americans (i.e., excluding Haitian and African immigrants), women outnumber men by more than 3-to-1. In New York City, ten percent of the women in the M & J study were seropositive while only eight percent of the men were; yet in actual heterosexually transmitted AIDS cases outside of high-risk groups in New York City (where interviewing techniques are most rigorous), women outnumber men by more than 60-to-1. And while the M & J study strongly implicates non-monogamy as increasing the risk of AIDS, researchers in New York City and elsewhere report that the great majority of their heterosexual AIDS cases are appearing in monogamous or nearly monogamous relationships. This may seem strange until one recognizes that this virus is so difficult to transmit heterosexually that the chance of receiving the virus in a quick relationship or the proverbial "one-night stand" is minuscule, so that the true risk comes from a long-term relationship with a bisexual or, more probably, an i.v.-drug user.

Thus the survey upon which most of the new M & J

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book and thesis is based proves only one thing: Masters and Johnson have become the Shere Hites of AIDS.

Not content to warn of the terrors of heterosexual intercourse, M & J (in a chapter entitled "Can You Catch AIDS from a Toilet Seat?") warn about shared toilet seats, French-kissing, drinking glasses, eating utensils, and restaurant chefs who cut their fingers. They stress that all of these are only theoretically possible as sources of infection. Why, then, do they bother to include them? It's also theoretically possible to be kidnapped by extraterrestrials and end up on the front page of the *National Enquirer*. But with the exception of the lottery, most of us don't spend much time thinking about things that have a less than one in five million chance of coming to pass.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

What possesses these people? Is Kolodny, as several man-on-the-street types have volunteered to me, the Rasputin behind the gentle czar and czarina of sex therapy? Are they just in it for the (no doubt considerable) bucks? Is this a stab at recapturing past glory unfelt since their publication of *Human Sexual Response* in 1970? Only last week an inkling of another possible motive leaked out. It was revealed by the *Wall Street Journal* that Dr. Masters was given $25,000 seed money last October by the pharmaceuticals company Johnson & Johnson (no relation to Virginia) to develop a spermicidal jelly to protect women from AIDS. Masters had previously asked the American Foundation for AIDS Research for some $500,000 for the same project but had been turned down.

Whatever the motivation, M & J are not alone among sex therapists. Helen Singer Kaplan, relying on the fringe doctors rather than the Centers for Disease Control, pushes the heterosexual breakout line in her 1987 paperback, *The Real Truth About Women and AIDS* (Simon and Schuster). Theresa Crenshaw, who studied under Masters and Johnson, has parlayed her similar view into a seat on the presidential AIDS commission. These are only a few of the better-known sex therapists, but one wonders if there isn't a possible connection beyond a measure of opportunism. Could it be that after years of at least being perceived as saying, "Have fun! Have guilt-free sex until you drop!" they are mortified to see people doing just that?

Whatever the case, one needn't be a sex therapist to suffer from literary AIDS opportunistic infections. *Newsweek* magazine, by excerpting the M & J book, has established itself as the flagship of irresponsible AIDS journalism (following in *Time*'s Shere Hite footsteps). In an accompanying article *Newsweek* pointed out that the M & J thesis was controversial and quoted several critics, but this no more excuses the magazine than if it excerpted a book by the Ku Klux Klan "proving" black intellectual inferiority, then labeled the underlying study controversial and printed opposition quotes.

Throughout the epidemic, the mainstream news media have more closely reflected the neuroses of their readership than the actual composition and development of the epidemic. When AIDS appeared originally as a purely homosexual or drug-user disease, they ignored it. As soon as a possible outbreak into the heterosexual ranks appeared, they began picking up on the story. Yet this was still not sexy enough. They then portrayed the virus as a special scourge to those least vulnerable to the disease: their white, middle-class, heterosexual readership. In the same week the Masters and Johnson report appeared in *Newsweek*, *People* magazine ran a cover story on "AIDS and the Single Woman." Of the 21 women featured in photographs, three were black and one was Hispanic. Yet 70 percent of female AIDS victims fall into the latter two categories.

There is, as yet, no cure or even treatment for AIDS literary opportunistic infections. Barring some unforeseen vaccine, they will continue as long as the AIDS epidemic itself. Let us pity, then, those who are dying of this horrible disease, AIDS. And let us pity those who have been terrorized into falsely believing they are at risk. But let us save the most pity for those who so irresponsibly exploit the deaths of some to promote unnecessary terror among the rest. □

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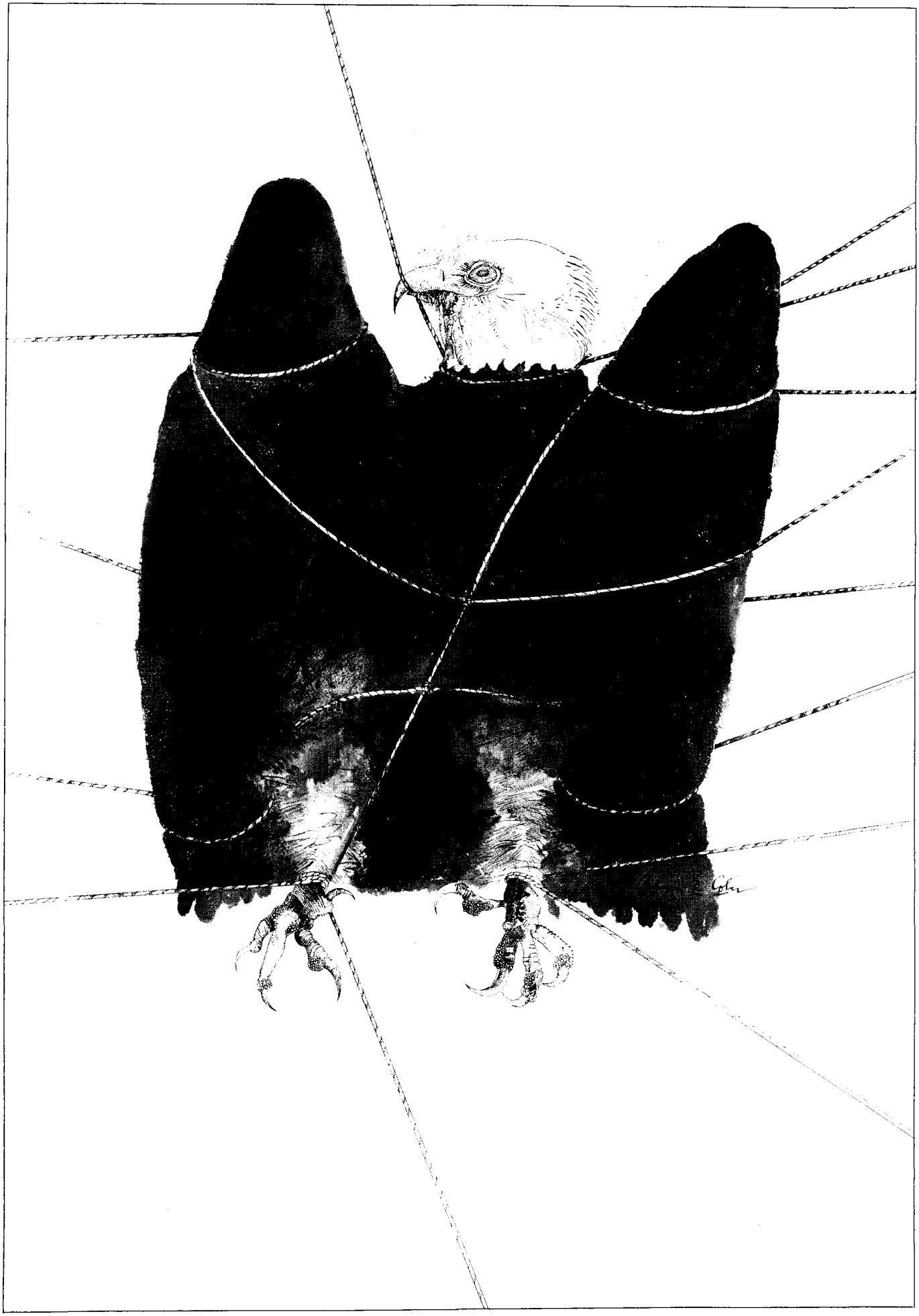

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AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS QUESTION WHY FREE ENTERPRISE DOESN'T APPLY TO AMERICAN BANKS.

Recently, the 13,500 members of the National Association of Manufacturers publicly declared that existing banking law must change.

They called for repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, the 1933 law which erected an artificial barrier between commercial and investment banking. The law which restrains America's commercial banks from competing in today's radically changed financial environment.

Why on earth would a textile manufacturer in North Carolina or a steel company in Ohio care about banks?

"Competition will stimulate new and innovative services, and produce lower costs in the financial markets. Manufacturers have borne additional cost because of artificial constraints."

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The N.A.M.'s raison d'être is to promote American business, and healthy competition. But clearly, like every other user of financial services, they stand to benefit from banks competing as equal players in the industry.

Manufacturers are hardly alone in questioning the value of Glass-Steagall restraints. Momentum for deregulation is ever-increasing, with supporters drawn from rather diverse sources: legislators, regulators, academicians, the media, the Administration, and naturally, America's banks.

An astonishing 77% of business executives in nonfinancial firms support repeal, according to a recent Senate banking committee survey.

What could account for such an overwhelming consensus?

"The consumer loses, denied the benefits of full competition..."

ROBERT E. LITAN, SENIOR ECONOMIC FELLOW THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE

When the Congress of 1933 thrust a wall between underwriting and lending, it could never have foreseen how profoundly financial markets would change. How the law would lock banks out of supplying what others in financial services can routinely provide. Or how such restraint would leave nearly 65% of this country's corporate debt and equity underwriting in the hands of just five investment banks.

Or how hamstringing commercial banks would make the U.S. woefully uncompetitive in a world marketplace.

"It seems inevitable that institutional deregulation will eventually arrive in the United States....However, the longer Glass-Steagall restrictions are kept in place, the more my own country stands to benefit."

DAVID WALKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR THE BANK OF ENGLAND

It is rather telling that some of the most vocal arguments for repeal come from the leaders of the federal agencies charged with protecting bank safety and soundness. The Federal Reserve Board Chairman. The U.S. Comptroller of Currency. The F.D.I.C.

So much for the unfounded fears that allowing bank holding companies to operate securities subsidiaries would mean increased risk for bank depositors.

Quite surprising, however, is backing from another source:

"...if one discounts those attempting to protect themselves from ever-increasing competition, there is an overwhelming consensus for restructuring the financial services industry."

JOHN G. HEIMANN, VICE CHAIRMAN MERRILL LYNCH CAPITAL MARKETS

Though there is such dissent in the ranks, the only major camp opposing deregulation is the Securities Industry Association—the lobby charged with protecting the investment banks' turf. Their opposition is scarcely unexpected.

The real barrier remains inertia. Undertaking reform of the financial services industry is a difficult task. But today, it is an essential one.

"We now have an historic opportunity to put the financial system on a sounder footing...to make it more responsive to consumer needs, more efficient, more competitive in the world economy, and equally important, more stable."

ALAN GREENSPAN, CHAIRMAN FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD

It's time to overhaul our nation's outmoded banking laws.

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INERTIA IS FAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN CHANGE

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Stale Roles

I'm glad that I saw *And God Created Woman*, but I'm sorry that Rebecca De Mornay made the picture. Not much of a paradox: she's as talented as ever, but her talent is wasted here on a film just substantial enough to give her performance a base.

The director, Roger Vadim of France, made a film of the same name in 1956 with his then wife, Brigitte Bardot. I saw it but can't remember anything about it except Bardot's body, which was probably Vadim's intent. In this new version—not precisely a remake—De Mornay's body is plentifully visible and equally memorable, but I'll remember a great deal besides: her feline face, open yet full of secrets; her voice that ranges from a stroking alto to fierce stridency; her absolute verity in any one scene, even though that scene (like a good aria in a patchwork opera) occurs in the middle of arrant nonsense.

And God Created Woman
(Vestron)

Stars and Bars
(Columbia)

Old-fashioned nonsense, too. Vadim has done some superficial updating—he makes De Mornay a rock singer with a band that she organizes—but the plot is basic Clara Bow. A female sexual pirate makes her way across a sea full of male galleons. Here she starts as an inmate of a New Mexico prison, doing time for helping a hunted friend. She wins parole through the intervention of a gubernatorial candidate whom she met in a sequence that would have made Clara happy. Her parole is confirmed because she gets married—an arranged, business-like marriage with a handsome, honest young carpenter. More plot, lashings of it, pours along. De Mornay has her clothes off much of the time and does a lot of sex simulation, but she also gets the chance to display her true magic, not just erotic appeal (which she certainly has) but the ability to make the individual moment arresting and credible, no matter what the film around it is like.

Vincent Spano gets solider as he moves along. He plays the carpenter with some variety and appeal. Frank Langella, a capable actor better known in the theater, is miscast as the New Mexico politico. Vadim, who has built his career on displaying the charms of women he knows, maritally or otherwise, has at least lost none of that skill.

De Mornay first drew attention as the quietly explosive call girl in *Risky Business*. Then she played a modest, conventional wife in *The Trip to Bountiful* and followed that with the scruffy freight-car kid in *Runaway Train*. None of these characters was especially complex, but De Mornay gave each its own incarnation, with changes seemingly not only in speech and movement but in her very chromosome patterns. She does it again in *Woman*. We're told that she has finished two more films. I hope that they deserve her.

I'm sorry that I saw *Stars and Bars*, and I'm sorry that Daniel Day Lewis is in it. Lewis is at least as talented as De Mornay, possibly more so. (But versatile young men have an advantage over versatile young women: the range of male possibilities is wider.) He is currently on view as the protagonist of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, before which he was the Edwardian prig in *A Room with a View* and the cockney gay in *My Beautiful Laundrette*. These three performances, taken together, constitute one of the most exciting phenomena in recent film acting, so Lewis is himself responsible for our high expectations of him.

Which are badly let down in this new film. I wish *Stars and Bars* could just disappear from every reel on which it's printed. Unlike De Mornay, Lewis isn't able to legitimize any moment in this dreadfully uncomic comic script (adapted by William Boyd from his own novel). The plot concerns an English art expert working for a New York gallery who is sent to a Southern backwoods town where a long-lost Renoir has turned up. At the outset we're told clumsily that this is a farce, and we can also spot incipient rheumatism. The affliction grows; the farce falters. Lewis is the one who suffers most in this ordeal because he's on-screen the most and because, even amid this poor cast, he is the one least gifted for farce—especially the physical aspects.

Stars and Bars proves that Pat O'Connor, the director who flubbed the Irish tragedy *Cal* and who didn't much help the English drama *A Month in the Country*, can do even more damage when he tackles farce. His comic sense is so lame that, for example, when Lewis is in desperate (allegedly) funny straits in a hotel elevator, O'Connor moves in for huge shadowed close-ups, shot from below, that might suit a Dostoyevskian hero in extremis. Most of the film takes place in a ramshackle Southern mansion near a ramshackle town, and O'Connor drags out every worn cliché on these subjects to italicize it.

With luck, future Lewis performances will connect with previous ones and will help to stow away *Stars and Bars* as an aberration.

To write these comments on De Mor-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Distant Harmony. Documentary about Luciano Pavarotti's 1986 tour of mainland China. The integration of two cultures is factitious but pleasant while it lasts—although the tenor looks even more Falstaffian among the lean Chinese. (Reviewed 3/21/88)

Housekeeping. A deep mythical drama of hemmed-in American frontier spirit, conveyed in a delicate comedy set in the Northwest. Excellent. (1/18/88)

A Month in the Country. Crisper directing would have helped. Still this English drama of two young veterans of the First War, recovering in the countryside, has beauties. (3/7/88)

The Unbearable Lightness of Being. Some very good actors do their best to compensate for everything of Kundera's plummy novel that has been stripped away. (2/29/88)

SK

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nay and Lewis, apt though I think them, is to be reminded of a persistent misconception—injustice, even. We tend to view a gifted actor's career much as we might view a painter's or novelist's: the artist has the world before himself or herself and can make choices at will. But choices are not equivalent for actors, not even for the best or the most successful or, as is sometimes the case, both. Admittedly, there are always a few exceptions: Paul Newman or Marlon Brando or Robert Duvall or George C. Scott can, or could, choose to do virtually anything in the theater and have, or had, nearly the same freedom in film. Yet they initiated little, and worse, they sometimes chose badly among the roles offered. My chief grievances against them are that they cheated me out of seeing them in great theater works (Scott is a partial exception) and that, with the influence to commission serious screenplays, they apparently sat around until chance brought scripts that seemed interesting.

But most actors, even most nominal stars, don't have that kind of power. They don't have much more than a veto. De Mornay could have chosen not to let Vadim try to make another Bardot sex kitten out of her, but what would she have done while she waited for a better script, if one came? Analogous questions apply to Lewis. Certainly good actors sometimes make bad choices eagerly. But most of the comment on inferior work by actors whom we respect, or on good work in an inferior script, ought to bear an invisible rubric: "Things being as they are, this is the best part that X was offered last year."

None of this is to excuse bad acting or bad films. But we ought to remember that actors are the most vulnerable and visible victims of the bankruptcies in our film world.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

The Best Play of Which Year?

Some plays are born out of their time, and it is a paradox that this can account either for a quick demise or a successful run, depending on what seems dated, the substance or the form. August Wilson's *Fences* was voted Best Play of 1987 by virtually every award committee extant. But with its tidy structure, linear realism, backyard ferment, and father-son confrontations, it's actually the Best Play of 1947, being a tendril of Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*. Lee Blessing's *A Walk in the Woods* might have been a worthy competitor for Best Play of 1982. But since its political agenda fails to keep pace with current events, it was obsolete before it opened and may not have the stamina to last the course.

Now on stage at the Booth Theatre, *A Walk in the Woods* is a two-character, one-set show about a couple of arms negotiators holding a series of private, heart-to-heart talks on a park bench in a forest near Geneva. Reputedly, the play is based on conversations held away from the conference table, seven years ago, by Paul Nitze and Yuli A. Kvitsinsky, when these Russian and American delegates reached an unofficial agreement regarding disarmament, only to see it subsequently rejected by their governments. The idea of two citizens of adversary nations trying to inject some sense into the official proceedings, before being blocked by cold war politics, has poignant potential; and the play proceeds in its earnest, well-intentioned, if plodding, fashion to demonstrate the ultimate ineffectuality of their melancholy labors. But *glasnost* and Gorbachev's surprising capacity to conclude an arms control deal with Reagan, despite the resistance of the president's right-wing supporters and, presumably, his own defense department, consign the play to the historical wastebasket.

Blessing makes little effort to accommodate recent developments, apart from one skeptical reference to "the new openness." It's not hard to see why. He displays an obstinate pessimism about transactions between governments as opposed to the possibility of positive dealings between men of goodwill, perhaps in the liberal delusion that long-standing ideological conflicts are merely the result of misunderstanding or suspiciousness, rather than the consequence of genuine differences: in short, if governments could display the same benevolence toward each other as private individuals, they would quickly resolve the issues that

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divide them. *A Walk in the Woods* reminds me of all those movies and TV miniseries that conclude with Russian and American citizens ruefully shaking hands while their rulers prepare to press the buttons that will blow them to smithereens.

It is at least possible that ruling systems are administered by the same species of human being as those amiable and judicious creatures who sit on park benches to discuss affairs of state. And if Gorbachev is presently the most interesting figure in world politics, it is because he has demonstrated how a powerful individual can change, even if only temporarily, the inexorable course of history—not through hands-across-the-sea sentiments as much as through recognizing that his system will collapse if it continues on its present course.

Friendship, on the other hand, is the taproot of the relationship between Andrey Botvinnik and John Honeyman, the fictionalized Russian and American negotiators of *A Walk in the Woods*. The play is really a flirtation on a park bench—a solemn and discursive version of *Key Exchange*—where two affectionate characters risk the wrath of their superiors in order to deepen their relationship. Botvinnik is represented as a genial, clownish sophisticate with a homiletic flair ("Formality is simply anger with its hair combed"; "History is geography over time"), while Honeyman is characterized as a driven, somewhat humorless man determined to create a diplomatic breakthrough. Both are charged with the difficult task of keeping our interest alive over the space of two hours, when the outcome of their efforts is foreordained before the curtain even rises.

Blessing is clearly less interested in the details of their proposals than in their courtship. "Do you like me?" asks the Russian, and though the American replies that "I'm here to make a treaty with you, not a friendship," it is their personal interaction that fills the interstices of the play. Botvinnik tries to persuade Honeyman to be more frivolous, to talk about Mickey Mouse or country music, while Honeyman tries to persuade Botvinnik to submit a new proposal to his superiors, saying, "If you don't do this, we will never be friends." Botvinnik agrees and, when the U.S. government rejects it, resigns from the peace table. "Will you miss me?" he asks Honeyman. "The new man will not be you" is the answer. They fail to kiss, but the play concludes with the two men sitting quietly, if hopelessly, in the lap of nature, pledging eternal friendship.

This sentimental contrast between private sensitivity and public intransigence takes place over four seasons, marked by falling leaves and flowers blossoming through the fake moss—the seasonal transitions being accompanied by the graceful woodwind music of Michael S. Roth (the temptation to use Vivaldi must have been strong). Des McAnuff has directed the event with pace and understanding. If he has also directed it with false climaxes and artificial comedy, the impulse is understandable considering that he is charged with feeding political porridge to pretty much the same culinary group that gobbles *Cats* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. Robert Prosky plays Botvinnik with a thick Russian accent and a coy sententiousness, though he is always a strong presence, and Sam Waterston's priggish, agonized Honeyman is full of passion, though he still seems to be choking back vestiges of guilt over deserting Dith Pran in *The Killing Fields*. Considering that all this play needs is a park bench, I admired the way Bill Clarke supplemented the space with birch and linden trees, enhanced by a suggestive painting upstage of another part of the forest, and the way Richard Riddell's lighting lent mystery to an otherwise excessively declarative evening.

HOWARD KORDER'S *Boys' Life* at the Mitzi E. Newhouse (Lincoln Center Theater) may not prove to be the Best Play of 1988, but at least it belongs to our time, having been written by a very interesting new playwright with a thoroughly contemporary sensibility. Korder writes under the influence of David Mamet—his play is being performed by members of the Atlantic Theater Company, a group of Mamet's former students who also act in his movies. Under the direction of W. H. Macy, another Mamet regular, *Boys' Life* bears a certain resemblance to *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*. Still, the imitation is far from slavish, since Korder's voice is singular and true. The most valuable thing he has learned from Mamet is not to announce his themes and characters but to let them emerge through the action.

Boys' Life is a series of vignettes revolving around three listless young studs, motivated exclusively by sexual desire, their energies aroused only by women. Don (Jordan Lage) takes up with a waitress who wants to be a sculptor, only to betray her with a casual kook on a one-night stand. Phil (Steven Goldstein) manages to connect with a girl at a party who can't decide whether to sleep with him or to go home with her escort. Jack (Clark Gregg) tries to seduce a female jogger while keeping one eye cocked toward his child on the jungle gym. These are men (boys really, hence the enigmatic title) without futures, without pasts, without purpose or sense of history. Asked to free associate about the '70s, all the "post-modern nut" Don can remember is Watergate and the Sex Pistols. "From campus cutups to wasted potentials"—that is the progress of their shared lethargy. Don hangs out in his underwear because "I like to be prepared for sleep." Phil is losing his hair, "and that really sucks." Jack, pretending to be a movie producer, offers a star a potential pickup in a movie about "a generation that had it all, and didn't know what to do with it."

The play seemingly tracks along as aimlessly as its characters, all the while preparing for a climax riddled with anomie. Confronted by his girl with evidence of his unfaithfulness, a pair of strange panties, Don declares his love and marries her. Jack—a marginal guest at the wedding, seated near the men's room, wearing a tuxedo jacket over his torn jeans—can think only of finding an apartment where he can cheat on his wife. To the shocked Phil, he says, "It doesn't matter what you do, because nobody's watching." The only affection he really feels is for his buddies; yet he can't help alienating them as well. Hugging Phil and claiming he loves him, Jack adds, "So can I have the apartment?" At the end, Jack is alone with his wife amid the detritus of the wedding, pouring sugar into the champagne to make it fizz. She's drunk and as desperate as he. "You're not the worst man in the world," she concludes. "I'm afraid you're just not—but you'd like to be."

This is the recognizable tone of the '80s—affectless, weightless, purposeless, stoned. Jack's sarcasm, though it suggests self-hatred, never falls into self-pity. He represents a generation that believes personal fulfillment to be an illusion of past times ("Happiness? That was the '60s"). In its insinuating, impressionistic way, *Boys' Life* contains a more eloquent political statement than anything to be heard in *A Walk in the Woods*, for all its clamorous speechifying and ponderous declamation. But the implicit message of *Boys' Life* is infinitely more disturbing and discordant. In the words of one of Korder's characters, "Everybody's worried about the world getting blown up, right? But what if it doesn't?" □

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INTELLECTUALS AND RELIGION

Recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, among both professors and students, and amid inquisitive people generally, there is an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This interest is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious reawakening entail falling into the suffocating arms of a Rev. Moon or a Jerry Falwell, or embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or America First, which we see celebrated all around us these days. Nor does the religious renaissance imply a retreat from working for peace and justice. Rather, there is an awareness that, in the words of Jean Bethke Elshtain, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political commitments which are far more solid than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and the dangers of pseudo-scientific messianisms.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this "return to religion," and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual fascination with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments which result in progressive social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary riches offered by such greats as Ignazio Silone, Graham Greene, Thomas Merton, W.H. Auden, Flannery O'Connor, and T.S. Eliot.

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Straussianism, democracy, and Allan Bloom, I.

THAT OLD-TIME PHILOSOPHY

BY RICHARD RORTY

TOWARD THE end of *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom says:

> The real community of man, in the midst of all the self-contradictory simulacra of community, is the community of those who seek the truth, of the potential knowers, that is, in principle, of all men to the extent they desire to know. But in fact this includes only a few, the true friends, as Plato was to Aristotle at the very moment they were disagreeing about the nature of the good.... This, according to Plato, is the only real friendship, the only real common good.... The other kinds of relatedness are only imperfect reflections of this one trying to be self-subsisting, gaining their only justification from their ultimate relation to this one.

This is an admirably frank expression of doubts about democracy, doubts that are shared by lots of intellectuals—usually with a bad conscience. These doubts are about whether the many non-intellectuals will ever want the sorts of things we intellectuals want, whether a democratic community can be built on the trash and the sleaze that they apparently *do* want, whether our allegiance to the idea of democracy is more than a cynical prudential strategy: You let us have your gifted children for our universities, where we will estrange them from you and keep the best ones for ourselves. In return, we will send the second-best back to keep you supplied with technology, entertainment, and soothing presidential lies.

One advantage of the Straussian school of political theory, to which Bloom belongs, is that Straussianism gives one a good conscience about these doubts. Straussians make no bones about saying that the allegiance of the "potential knowers" with the masses is just a prudential strategy. On their view, nobody would accept the risks of being subject to the whims of an electorate dumb enough to have voted for Hitler, if there were a better alternative. But there is not, so we make the best of a bad job. Straussians reject Emerson's and Dewey's attempt to find one's moral identity in membership in a democratic community. They consider such an attempt—the attempt to pretend that a pluralistic democratic society can be more than an incoherent "simulacrum of community"—to be as childish as Marx's fantasy that an emancipated working class will read philosophy in the intervals of non-alienating labor.

Leo Strauss, the great émigré political philosopher who was Bloom's teacher, was relatively coy and guarded in his expression of such doubts. But his students have become increasingly open. Bloom puts in cold print a story that should only be whispered to initiates. It revolves around the "philosophers" (the Straussian name for the lovers of truth, not to be confused with the merely clever, the "intellectuals"). These philosophers have always been, of necessity, liars. In Bloom's words, "they have engaged in the gentle art of deception." Strauss spoke, still more gently, of "the need for inexactness in moral and political matters." They lie because they are not, and probably never will be, the rulers. As an interest group whose interests can never be made intelligible to nonmembers, they must flatter and cozen whoever does hold power. "In the days before the rise of democratic societies," Bloom says, "the philosophers allied themselves with the gentlemen, making themselves useful to them, never quite revealing themselves to them, strengthening their gentleness and openness by reforming their education."

But then the mob rose and began cutting off heads, so the philosophers had to find a way of cozening the mob. Cleverly, they "switched parties from the aristocratic to the democratic," even though they "had no illusions about democracy." They "substituted one kind of misunderstanding for another," presenting philosophy to the common man not as "his moral preceptor but as his collaborator in his fondest dreams." In other words, the mob came to believe that those nice, kind, hard-working Alphas were going to help them get the things they wanted—if not immortality, at least as prolonged a life as possible, and a life in a brave new world of ever more exciting low pleasures (public executions, Rambo films, novel quiches and jeans, and always, in the background, ever more sexually explicit forms of what Strauss liked to call "jungle music"). In exchange, the common people allowed the philosophers to live in well-funded universities—institutions they naively thought of as "serving society." "The universities," Bloom says, "flourished because they were perceived to serve society as it wants to be served."

What disgusts Bloom is that the vast majority of people in the social science and humanities departments of universities are, in his terms, intellectuals rather than philosophers. These intellectuals think that one can deal honestly with the public—if not by serving it as it wants to be served, at least by being open about how it ought to want to be served. They do not understand that the crucial function of the universities is to serve (and to replenish the supply of) philosophers.

Bloom's animus is not against the mob, but against the intellectuals—the people who, following Emerson and Dewey, assume that the success of our "democratic experiment" has made us contemporary Americans wiser than the Greeks. These are the local variety of the people whom Strauss called "historicists." Historicists believe that Plato and Aristotle are obsolete, as are Greek notions like "timeless truth" or "the nature of the good"—not to mention the philosopher/gentleman/mob way of dividing up society, and the soul/body, or reason/passion, way of dividing up human beings. Among the best examples of historicism—the clearest antitheses to Strauss—are Mill, Dewey, and Rawls. About the first two, Bloom says:

> Liberalism without natural rights, the kind that we knew from John Stuart Mill and John Dewey, taught us that the only danger confronting us is being closed to the emergent, the new, the manifestations of progress. No attention had to be paid to the fundamental principles or the moral virtues that inclined men to live according to them.

But Bloom is harshest on Rawls, whom he describes as writing

> hundreds of pages to persuade men, and proposing a scheme of government that would force them, not to despise anyone. In *A Theory of Justice*, he writes that the physicist or the poet should not look down on the man who spends his life counting blades of grass or performing any other frivolous or corrupt activity. Indeed, he

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should be esteemed, since esteem from others, as opposed to self-esteem, is a basic need of all men. So indiscriminateness is a moral imperative because its opposite is discrimination. This folly means that men are not permitted to seek for the natural human good and admire it when found, for such discovery is coeval with the discovery of the bad and contempt for it.

In such passages, Bloom lumps books like *A Theory of Justice* with books like *One-Dimensional Man* (which he characterizes, with some justice, as "trashy culture criticism"). He sees no difference between the know-nothing campus trashers of the '60s, with their babble about "elitism," and writers who, like Rawls and Dewey, envisage a society in which, no matter how discriminating we are in private, we do not let the institutions of society humiliate those whose tastes and habits we find contemptible. The difference that Bloom blurs is between saying, "Video games are as good as poetry," and saying, "In the interest of a pluralist democratic community that encompasses both those who read poetry and those who never will, we must make our laws and institutions as indifferent as possible to the difference between video games and poetry." Bloom has no patience with the idea that such a purported community might be more than an "incoherent simulacrum." The idea that political thinking and social institutions should swing free from a hierarchical ordering of types of human being seems, to Straussians, *the* great mistake of the modern age.

GIVEN his view about the special kind of friendship that bound Plato to Aristotle, despite their disagreements, one would expect Bloom, somewhere in his book, to strike up conversations with theorists like Rawls, Michael Walzer, Charles Taylor, Roberto Unger, or Judith Shklar—the people who think about the same texts and problems as he does, though coming at them from different angles. But he tends to take seriously only those who share most of his own views, only those who agree that philosophers must, perforce, be liars. He has no time for historicists who think that, as Rawls says:

> What justifies a conception of justice is not its being true to an order antecedent to and given to us, but its congruence with our deeper understanding of ourselves and our aspirations, and our realization that, given our history and the traditions embedded in our public lives, it is the most reasonable doctrine for us.

For Bloom, anybody who could say that has already forfeited his candidacy for the only "real community of man"—has shown himself to be a mere "intellectual," rather than a "philosopher."

Bloom treats Dewey, who thought that notions like "the soul" and "timeless truth" belonged to the infancy of philosophy—to the period when we had not yet grown out of religious fear and awe—as himself "a big baby." Bloom is not interested in political thinkers who, unlike Machiavelli, sincerely settle for what Isaiah Berlin calls "negative liberty" (being left alone, as opposed to the "positive liberty" of being aided in achieving the good). Such thinkers believe that, as Strauss put it, "what is needed in order to establish the right social order is not so much the formation of character as the right kinds of institutions." But, Strauss thought, the latter idea will sooner or later bring one around to the claim "that the only legitimate regime is democracy"—to the mistaken idea that democracy is intellectually, not just prudentially, justifiable.

The result of this discrimination in admissions to Socratic discussion has been that Straussians have become a sort of cult. Even though this cult includes some notably learned and genuinely thoughtful people, controversy between Straussians and non-Straussians tends quickly to become rancorous, to bog down in questions about the correct exegesis either of Strauss himself, or of the texts (Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Rousseau) around which Strauss built his subtle and intricate account of our decline from antiquity into modernity.

Toward the end of a review of Rawls, Bloom said that the "greatest weakness" of Rawls's book was "the lack of education it reveals," and that the "core of the book" was constituted of "misunderstandings" of Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. Straussians typically do not countenance alternative, debatable interpretations of those writers, but rather distinguish between their own "authentic understandings" and others' "misunderstandings." In this respect they resemble the Marxists and the Catholics. The tone in which Bloom writes about Plato is the same as that in which Althusser and Fredric Jameson write about Marx, in which Maritain (and the young William Buckley) used to write about Aquinas, in

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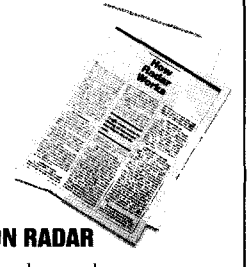
b) 649,119
c) 0
d) No one knows



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which many members of what Bloom (in his best chapter) calls "the Nietzscheanized left" write about Foucault. There is no question of any of these authors having been fundamentally misguided; the only question is how to render what they wrote internally consistent.

From Bloom's point of view, however, it is misleading to suggest, as I have suggested, that there is a free, open forum in which the Straussians might argue Socratically with their opponents. For things are much worse than most people think. "We are," Bloom tells us, "like ignorant shepherds living on a site where great civilizations once flourished." The idea (widely held in Europe and Asia) that America's universities are notably free and flourishing, that they are as splendid centers of learning and forums for Socratic discussion as the world has ever known, is widely mistaken. On the contrary, the subtitle of Bloom's book tells us, "Higher education has failed democracy and impoverished the souls of today's students." Further, "The crisis of liberal education is a reflection of a crisis at the peaks of learning, an incoherence and incompatibility among the first principles with which we interpret the world, an intellectual crisis of our civilization."

The American universities, especially since the disastrous '60s, have "decomposed." In the humanities, "There is no semblance of order, no serious account of what should and should not belong, of what its disciplines are trying to accomplish and how." In America, "The philosophic language is nothing but jargon." Small wonder that the saving remnant of philosophers keeps to itself and does not mingle with the jargoneering intellectuals—all those people clever enough to manipulate abstractions, but not patient or honest enough to see the incoherence of their own historicism. Small wonder that, to these people, the Straussian remnant looks like another intolerant and self-obsessed sect.

BLOOM'S BOOK raises three questions. First, is he right, over against common opinion, about the state of American higher education? Second, was Plato right, over against Dewey, in thinking that there is a permanent, ahistorical truth about the nature of human beings and of the good? Third, can one argue the first question independently of arguing the second? Or do we have to figure out whether Plato was right before we can decide whether our universities are in bad shape?

Bloom thinks that we do—that we have to start from first principles. We Deweyan historicists, on the other hand, think that "first principles" are abbreviations of, rather than justifications for, a set of beliefs about the desirability of certain concrete alternatives over others; the source of those beliefs is not "reason" or "nature," but rather the prevalence of certain institutions or modes of life in the past. So we think that the method of political theory is what Rawls calls "the attempt at reflective equilibrium." We muddle through, without any clear antecedent criterion, by juxtaposing our intuitive judgment of some recent development (a novel institution or mode of life) with some old "first principle" that seems to conflict with it, in the hope of finding a way to balance competing claims.

THE HISTORICIST claim that such criterionless muddling must take the place of the Platonic appeal to immutable standards presupposes that there are lots of institutions and modes of life that Plato (and for that matter, Locke or Mill) knew nothing about. By contrast, it is essential to Bloom's position that Plato's and Aristotle's vocabulary is, for purposes of political philosophy, entirely adequate to everything that has happened since their day, that there are no alternatives of which Plato was unaware. For if history is always throwing up new material, then Plato's test of coherence could not have produced a timeless standard in morals or politics. Historicists think that we shall never have anything firmer to fall back on than our accumulated experience of the advantages and disadvantages of various concrete alternatives (judged by nothing more immutable than our common sense, the judgment of the latest, best-informed, and freest of the children of time).

Whether one is a Straussian "philosopher" or a historicist "intellectual" depends on whether one finds this lack of a timeless and unvarying standard acceptable. Strauss thought it unacceptable. He thought that "if there is no standard higher than the ideal of our society, we are utterly unable to take a critical distance from that ideal." Deweyans think this is a non sequitur. They think that we can find a critical distance just by comparing the detailed advantages and disadvantages of our institutions and modes of life with other real (historical and anthropological) or imagined (literary) alternatives—without claiming that any of these alternatives are "higher" or "closer to nature." Deweyans reject what Bernard Williams has recently called "the rationalist theory of rationality," the idea that if you cannot lay down a criterion for settling arguments in advance, then you are condemned to "irrationalism" and "relativism." For Strauss and Bloom, however, all this is incompatible with the Platonic picture of the philosopher as someone who seeks the good by nature, as opposed to simply sorting through alternative conventions.

THE CONTRAST between Dewey's stance and Bloom's comes out nicely in a passage in which Bloom harks back to Plato's myth of the cave. He says:

> A culture is a cave. He [Plato] did not suggest going around to other cultures as a solution to the limitations of the cave. Nature should be the standard by which we judge our own lives and the lives of peoples. That is why philosophy, not history or anthropology, is the most important human science.

Dewey did suggest going around to other cultures. He thought that the benefit of going around (via history and anthropology) to other cultures was the same as that offered by the arts—the enlargement of our moral imaginations. He put his faith in the arts rather than in philosophy because he did not believe that there was such a thing as "nature" to serve as "the standard." The idea of "human nature," like "the quest for certainty," was a cowardly attempt to reduce a self-creating being to one that was already finished and unchangeable.

Dewey warned that, to people still immature enough to long for certainty:

> To say frankly that philosophy can proffer nothing but hypotheses, and that these hypotheses are of value only as they render men's minds more sensitive to life about them, would seem like a negation of philosophy itself.

That is, indeed, how it seems to Straussians. Strauss organized his history of political thought around a story of decay: the story of how we have lost touch with the notion of "philosophizing" as a distinct human activity, as the activity that affords "the only true happiness," that Bloom thinks makes possible the only "real community of man." Dewey thought this change indicated maturity rather than degeneration. On his view, Plato's "spectator theory of knowledge" and his doctrine that only the "potential

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knowers" could form a genuine community were primitive hypotheses, whose retention, even in diluted form, will make us insensitive to the possibilities of democratic life.

What matters to us "intellectuals," as opposed to the "philosopher," is the imaginativeness and openness of discourse, not proximity to something lying beyond discourse. Both Platonists and Deweyans take Socrates as their hero. For Plato, the life of Socrates did not make sense unless there was something like the Idea of the Good at the end of the dialectical road. For Dewey, the life of Socrates made sense as a symbol of a life of openness and curiosity. It was an experimental life—the sort of life that is encouraged by, and in turn encourages, the American democratic experiment.

The Deweyan idea that society should worry only about the freedom of the universities, and not about what is taught there, is paralleled by the Rawlsian claim that social justice is a matter of procedure rather than of substance: that it swings free of alternative "conceptions of the good." When thinking about alternative social institutions, we have to substitute the Rawlsian question, "Is this institution fair to everybody, in the sense of not favoring one race, sex, IQ level, income level, or sense of the point of human existence over another?" for the question, "What is the good for man?"

Rawls's conception of justice as fairness is, for Bloom, a reductio ad absurdum of the lines of thought that have gradually, through Hobbes and Locke and Mill, led us away from the Greek question, "What sort of person should a state try to produce?" and toward the question, "How can we maximize freedom and equality?" Bloom would like the question of whether this philosophical result is absurd to be determined by "first principles." We Deweyans would like it to be determined by inspection of the merits of some concrete proposals for the reform of American institutions.

Thus one has to come back to the concrete: Is Bloom right about how things currently are with American higher education? Unfortunately, Bloom's account of what higher education should be like sounds plausible only if one already believes a lot of what Plato believed. (A more exact subtitle for Bloom's book would have been "How democracy has failed philosophy and made it difficult for students to take Plato seriously.")

Bloom gives the impression that he is doing the same sort of thing as E. D. Hirsch in *Cultural Literacy*. These books have often been reviewed and discussed together—treated as if Bloom has done for the universities what Hirsch has done for the primary and secondary schools, as if Bloom supplied the philosophical basis for Hirsch's criticism of current educational practices. But the two books could hardly be more different. Hirsch is working in the framework of a Deweyan understanding of democracy, pointing out (quite rightly) that Dewey's ideas about "skills" as opposed to "content" have worked out very badly, and that very specific reforms are needed if we are to have an electorate able to understand the issues of the day. He wants to make the students better citizens of a democracy. He wants them to recognize more allusions, and thereby be able to take part in more conversations, read more, have more sense of what those in power are up to, cast better-informed votes. Dewey would have cheered Hirsch on.

Bloom's advocacy of "the good old

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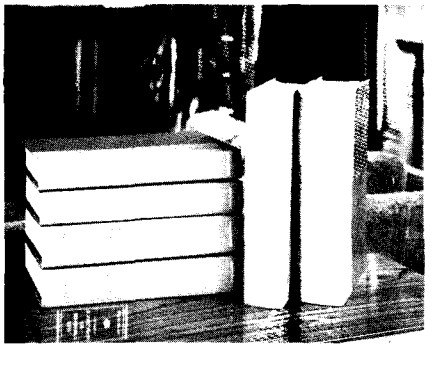

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Great Books approach" may seem like the same sort of effort, applied to colleges as opposed to high schools. But lots of people who would favor (as I would) both Hirschian reforms in precollege education and a Great Books curriculum in the first two years of college will demur at what Bloom takes to be integral to a "Great Books approach." For Bloom is advocating not just that we make college students read "certain generally recognized classic texts," but that they be read in a particular, characteristically Straussian way, that is,

> letting them [the texts] dictate what the questions are and the method of approaching them—not forcing them into categories we make up, not treating them as historical products, but trying to read them as their authors wished them to be read.

This description of how to read may sound harmless enough, but think about it. Normally we read books with questions in mind—not questions dictated by the books, but questions we have previously, if vaguely, formulated. It is not clear how we can avoid forcing books "into categories we make up," since it is not clear how we can make our minds into blank tablets. To be sure, we need to give authors a run for their money—suspending doubt or disbelief long enough to work ourselves into an author's way of talking and thinking, trying to put ourselves in her shoes, giving her every chance to convince us. But I doubt that that sort of initial sympathetic suspension is enough for Bloom. For it is characteristic of the Straussians to think that a student who throws himself into Plato and emerges with a preference for Mill, Dewey, and Rawls has misread Plato—that his soul has already been so impoverished (by the insidious historicism that pervades contemporary intellectual life) that he is no longer capable of reading properly. If students who accept Platonism are relatively thin on the ground in the universities, so the Straussians reason, so much the worse for the universities.

WHEN WE professors start falling back on "an intellectual crisis of the greatest magnitude" or "repressive tolerance" or "the treason of the clerks" (that is, of some other professors) to explain our failure to get more students to agree with us, what is to be done? From a Deweyan angle, the only thing to do is to check out the state of academic freedom. Are the students able to read whatever they like without getting (even covertly and mildly) punished for it? Are the teachers able to say what they like and still get promoted? Do the faculties exert themselves to take in representatives of every conceivable movement—deconstructionists, Marxists, Habermasians, Catholics, Straussians? Do the government, the trustees, and the university administration keep the money coming without asking what is done with it? Is the library open late at night, and is there enough scholarship money so that the students can be found there rather than taking orders at McDonald's? Is truth being given every chance to win in a free and open encounter? By reference to such questions, American universities are in better shape than any other institutions of learning in history. But from Bloom's Platonic angle, these questions are not the only ones, nor the most important ones. Bloom thinks that we have to ask not just about institutional procedures, but about the substance of what is being taught.

About the last thing we Deweyans want is for humanities departments to have a consensus about their function and mission. When Bloom speaks of "the problem of the humanities, and therefore of the unity of knowledge," we Deweyans cannot see why knowledge should be thought of as a unity (rather than, say, as a bag of tools). The university as flea market (though not, for reasons given by Hirsch, the primary or secondary school as flea market) is fine with us. Once the defects of our high schools have been made up for by a couple of years' worth of Great Books, the students should be left free to shop around in as large and noisy a bazaar as possible.

BLOOM DOES NOT offer much in the way of practical proposals. It would be nice to know how he thinks we could restructure the universities so that they would cease "impoverishing the students' souls" while still hanging on to what we have come to think of as academic freedom. (For example, can he suggest a way of getting us historicists off what he calls "the peaks of learning" without giving somebody like the secretary of education the power to fill professorial chairs?) Maybe there is a way to do this, but it is not obvious. Or maybe we can afford to lose some of our academic freedom in order to serve other goals more efficiently, but this is not obvious either. Unless Bloom follows his book up with one that gets down from first principles to the nitty-gritty (in the way that Hirsch does), it is going to be hard to evaluate the apocalyptic claim with which he ends:

> This is the American moment in world history, the one for which we shall forever be judged. Just as in politics the responsibility for the fate of freedom in the world has devolved upon our regime, so the fate of philosophy in the world has devolved upon our universities, and the two are related as they have never been before.

This suggestion that there is a close relation between the fate of philosophy and the fate of freedom amounts to the claim that unless we can recapture belief in the Greek notions that, taken together, give credence to the claim that the philosophers are the only real human community—unless we can bring ourselves, in short, to go back to Plato—we have little chance of avoiding a relapse into tyranny. Only that old-time philosophy can save us now.

THE CLAIM that resistance to tyranny depends on agreeing with Plato goes back to Strauss's idea that we can blame Hitler on false theories about man and nature and truth—on "value-relativism" and historicism. Strauss shared with many other émigrés—with Adorno, for example, his opposite number on the left—the idea that reference to what had been happening in European intellectual life helped explain the coming of fascism. Bloom takes this idea for granted when he sardonically attributes to the American disciples of Freud and Weber the view that "the trouble with Weimar was simply that the bad guys won."

On a Deweyan view, that *was* the only trouble with Weimar. The fact that, as Bloom says, "German thought had taken an anti-rational and anti-liberal turn with Nietzsche, and even more so with Heidegger," did not do much to tip the balance in favor of the bad guys, any more than the popularity of Deweyan pragmatism among American intellectuals of the '30s does much to explain why fascism did not happen here. Disagreements among intellectuals as to whether truth is timeless, whether "reason" names an ahistorical tribunal or a Habermasian free consensus, or whether the "inalienable rights" of the Declaration are "grounded" in something non-historical, or are instead admirable recent inventions (like education for women, and the transistor), are just not that important in deciding how elections go, or how much resistance

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fascist takeovers encounter. For Deweyans, the theoretical questions "Did Socrates answer Thrasymachus?" and "Can we answer Hitler?" get replaced by practical questions like "How can we arrange things so that people like Thrasymachus and Hitler will not come to power?"

The public rhetoric of contemporary America is an inchoate mixture of religious, Platonic, and Deweyan ideas. Words of praise and blame are constantly being used in different senses that presuppose different understandings of background notions such as "reason," "truth," and "freedom." This mixed rhetoric is just what one would expect of a pluralist society, but it makes it easy for opposing intellectual factions to find tom-toms to beat, and to secure attention for warnings that their opponents are betraying the republic. You can always raise a scare by charging "relativism" or "irrationalism," but you can raise one equally well by charging "dogmatism" or "scholasticism." It would be easy, though cheap and dishonest, to reply to Bloom by beating my own drum and issuing my own warnings. A Deweyan response could easily go on about intellectual snobbery, failure to trust the Healthy Instincts of the People, and, of course, "elitism."

But it would be better for both sides to discuss, in a cool hour, whether our country's unease is a matter of the "deep spiritual malaise" of which we have been hearing so much lately. Perhaps this unease is just the result of running up against some unpleasant, stubborn, merely material facts. For example: that this has turned out not to be the American Century, that the "American moment in world history" may have passed, that democracy may not spread around the world, that we do not know how to mitigate the misery and hopelessness in which half of our fellow-humans (including a fifth of our fellow-citizens) live.

Deweyans suspect that we Americans are not suffering from anything deeper or more spiritual than having bitten off a lot more than we turned out to be able to chew—that is, the task of saving the world from tyranny and want. Perhaps our problem is not internal hollowness, but straightforward external failure, the shipwreck of some of the hopes on which we were raised. These hopes, like those with which Plato sailed to Syracuse, may seem naive in retrospect, but they were neither silly nor disreputable.

Straussianism, democracy, and Allan Bloom, II.

DEMOCRACY AND THE GREAT BOOKS

BY HARVEY C. MANSFIELD JR.

I DO NOT know how to explain the paradoxical success of Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. Perhaps the American mind has not yet snapped shut. Perhaps it has, but has decided to punish Bloom ironically by making him rich and famous. In any case, the merits of his book—its intelligence, its range, its brilliance, its passion—were obvious enough to earn a friendly, even enthusiastic welcome from most of its first reviewers. Lately, however, the mainstream professors have been busy, and the reviews have turned sour and resentful. The *New York Times* has been compelled to change its mind: on second thought, the book that its daily reviewer said was the best in the last five years wasn't even on the annual list of the best of 1987. The *Times* listens to professors, and the professors know who Bloom is; so they know he deserves a more straightforward punishment. He's a "Straussian," a follower (in Bloom's case, a student) of Leo Strauss, an obscure professor of political philosophy at the University of Chicago who died in 1973.

Actually Strauss, though he counseled against seeking the limelight, is not obscure in the usual way, by having done nothing remarkable. He has been kept in obscurity by professors through the "silent treatment," variously applied, to discourage the reading of his books and to blight the academic prospects of his followers. Strauss and the Straussians

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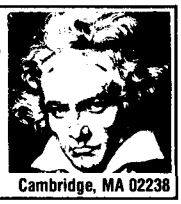

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have in general been regarded not as a challenge to be taken up, but as an embarrassment that it is a kindness to ignore if you can, like a belch at the dinner table. But with Bloom's success, impossible to ignore, fallback strategies have had to be adopted. Tendentious denigration has replaced the silent treatment, and something has had to be said directly to the naughty boy.

RICHARD RORTY'S essay is an example of the latter. One would not know it from his confrontation of new-time Deweyans with old-time Straussians (the only distinction, apparently, that he does not consider artificial), but this is, I believe, the first extended notice that a prominent American philosophy professor has taken of Strauss. Rorty tries to pretend that Straussians invite their neglect by their clannish bad manners; but his complaint of unrequited love is malarkey. When has he ever sent flowers? In his present performance he has not one word of praise ("admirably frank" never signifies admiration) for Bloom's book. All his talk of toleration does not prompt him to any acknowledgment that he is meeting a worthy opponent.

Instead, Rorty and the other professors denounce Bloom and the Straussians as anti-democratic. They say that we (since I am a Straussian) are guilty of elitism, that we oppose democracy, and that we have a hidden agenda of conservatism (conservatism being undemocratic). These charges are answered in Bloom's book, but for those who like magazines I shall try to refute them here.

Rorty himself dismisses the charge of elitism as babble from the '60s, but it is often heard at universities and has found its way into THE NEW REPUBLIC. It's elitism, in this view, for Bloom to recommend that college students read the Great Books; not enough of these books were written by women or blacks. But then Rorty, who wants a two-year Great Books requirement in college, stands guilty as well. The charge *is* babble, but it's worth a moment's consideration for the temper it reflects.

A Great Books requirement is elitism, allegedly, because it promotes an elite. But a liberal democracy such as ours is the kind of democracy that makes room for outstanding people—for a "natural aristocracy," in Jefferson's phrase. Our founding principles provide freedom for the ambitious in politics, business, and culture, as opposed to other democracies, ancient and modern, that were constituted out of dislike of the few. This does not mean that ambition should live unchecked, but the general rule for business and culture has been the one stated by Madison for politics: let ambition counteract ambition. The result is the pluralism we take pride in. Elitism is a necessary feature of pluralism. Differences are made and kept by those who have the ambition to make a difference.

Or is it that the Great Books support the wrong elite, the white male elite? To call this "elitism" implies that the right elite is closer to the people than the wrong one, hence not really an elite. It is amazing to hear intellectuals speak as if they were closer to the people than are Ronald Reagan and Lee Iacocca. Politicians and businessmen have more than ordinary ambition, but ordinary democrats, who also want power and money, can understand these desires. What they do not easily understand is people who read and write and think all the time. It is intellectuals, then, who have the most to lose in a democracy by raising the charge of elitism. That they do raise it is testimony to their hatred of the bourgeoisie (on which read Bloom), and even more, to their hatred of *defenders* of the bourgeoisie. Reagan is nothing but an actor; his intellectual defenders are class traitors. Nonetheless, his defenders, and incipient neoconservatives such as Edward Koch, have been able to turn the charge of elitism against the radicals who first used it. Let them beware. Intellectuals, the primary beneficiaries of elitism, should be the last to attack it.

WHY DO they attack it? Because they have lost faith in the intellect. Intellectuals no longer believe that the intellect can rise above the accidents of sex and race; so they conclude that the Great Books written by white males must reflect the interests of white males. They then feel justified in subjecting the Great Books to a political test in order to "broaden their appeal." A radical solution would be to throw them out and start afresh from *The Color Purple*. The more usual solution is to deprive them of their privileged standing and let ignorant students choose between the Great Books and hitherto undervalued, newly interpreted works by women and blacks. A third solution has been discovered by Martha Nussbaum, Bloom's relentless critic in the *New York Review of Books*, who seems to have assigned herself the task of discrediting Bloom's scholarship. Her way is to democratize and to feminize the ancients so that they repeat her views or at least contradict his. This has the advantage of releasing the feminist scholar from the lifelong study of feminist tracts. It has the disadvantage of having to admit that white males can tell the truth if it is put in their mouths.

To insist on the Great Books is sometimes said to be elitism because it excludes non-Western civilizations. But again, the intellectuals who say this do not seriously intend to compare the merits of Western democracy with the caste system in India and the dynasties in China. They want us, instead, to be impressed with the impossibility of making such comparisons. To be convinced of this impossibility is the basis for the virtue of openness that Bloom decries and Rorty defends.

RORTY FASTENS on Bloom's statement that philosophic friendship, the only true human association, is the province of the few—and pronounces it anti-democratic. It would be, if philosophic friendship were a political relationship; but it isn't. It is above politics, though perhaps in some sense, as one finds in Aristotle, the ideal of politics. Philosophical friendship is neither aristocracy nor democracy, because it is critical of both. But for Rorty the historicist, the philosopher is incapable of transcending his historical, which means his political, situation. For him, the philosopher cannot be critical of his times, and any attempt on his part to do so has to be understood as a political act no less partisan for its pretense at objectivity. When Bloom expressly says in his preface that he writes from the perspective of a teacher (that is, not a politician), this can be safely disregarded because there is no such perspective. All teaching is like washing a shirt in dirty water; it is, as we say today, "socialization"—a process in which teacher and student exchange prejudices. In this view, "education" in the literal sense of being led out of one's prejudices is impossible, hence foolish to attempt.

Rorty's historicism leads to a thoroughly politicized view of the university. Since every position is in the politics of one's times, one may as well accept the inevitable and charge ahead toward the political solution of one's liking. Just this argument has been used in the debate over South African divestiture that has hounded universities in recent years. Since universities' investments are nec-

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essarily partisan, it is said, why not get on the right side? Rorty does not want a politicized university, of course; he wants a tolerant one open to all views. To get a balanced, tolerant university he has to promote his view—that of "Deweyan historicism"—because other views, especially the Straussian, tend to think they are closer to a non-historical truth than their rivals, hence tend to become intolerant. They cannot think they are closer to the truth without also wanting to impose their view, again, since thinking is never more than an effort at self-assertion.

But if a person thinks he is *not* right (non-historically), will that necessarily make him tolerant? Why could he not draw the contrary lesson just as reasonably—that as all truth is someone's truth, let's have mine? Rorty's tolerant university depends on a forbearance, or a denial of one's own will, that is not inevitable and has not occurred. Nietzsche said that men rather will nothingness than will nothing. Strauss often quoted this farseeing remark, and it is the premise of Bloom's argument that the left in our day has become Nietzschean. It explains why fascism, despite its defeats on the battlefield, has been intellectually superior to communism. Communism, in its desire to put an end to class conflict, is essentially for wimps (notice the currency of that word, by the way, as our portmanteau for everything despicable). To survive as a doctrine, communism has had to abandon its rational economics and take assertiveness training from fascism. Rorty's democratic university will do—has done—the same thing.

BESIDES politicizing the university, Rorty's historicism makes for bad democrats and irresponsible citizens. Good democrats think democracy can be good, and when they see it is not, they take responsibility for reforming it. Their responsibility is based on their holding democracy to the standard of good government. To do this, they must think that good government as a standard is above democracy; it is what democracy aims at, for example the ends stated in the preamble to the Constitution. They must not think that government is automatically good merely by being democratic, as this belief can make them both fanatic in their zeal for democracy and complacent as to its behavior.

The American Founders, wishing to encourage and to establish this responsibility, distinguished themselves from previous founders of republics by their attention to the vices of republics rather than merely to the enemies of republics. They saw that the vice of majority faction was a graver risk to a republic than minority faction, its enemy, because the latter is opposed by the republican form of the government and the republican genius of the people, whereas majority faction by definition looks good to the majority.

The responsible democrat, whom the Founders hoped to create, takes particular care for the things majorities ignore or neglect. Politically, he worries more about demagogues than about elitists; socially, he is less concerned about poverty than about the virtues that money cannot buy. Every regime has a partisan tendency, even democracy—despite the pretense of its defenders, encouraged by Rorty, that it includes everyone and everything. This tendency must be identified and appreciated in the light of a standard outside itself; it cannot, of course, simply be opposed. The responsible democrat needs a majority on his side, so he tries, within its limits, to bring it to understand what he understands. The responsible democrat carries in his mind a mixed picture of what majorities easily appreciate and of what they need to appreciate but tend to resist. This is a mixture of what makes a democracy democratic with what makes it work; the responsible democrat knows that these are not the same.

RORTY'S democrat is altogether different. He believes he cannot know what the good is, hence cannot know whether democracy is good or not. Instead of holding democracy to a higher standard outside itself, thus dividing his loyalties, he saves all his love for democracy. The only way he can tell whether democracy works is by judging whether it is becoming more democratic. Instead of a picture of a mixed regime, he carries in his mind a picture of perfect democracy, a regime whose goal is, in Rorty's words, to "maximize freedom and equality." This is the criterion of democrats who want no criterion.

Rorty's democrat is ordinarily oblivious to the non-democratic character of many features of American democracy that make it work better, such as one-man rule in the executive, independence in the judiciary, and elections rather than lot to fill the legislature. But if these features were called to his attention, he would instinctively desire to democratize them or could think of no reason why not to. Indeed, Rorty's democrat would accuse the responsible democrat of a cynical prudence, one that justifies anti-democratic privileges, just as Rorty himself accuses Straussians of cynically adjusting to the democracy their philoso-

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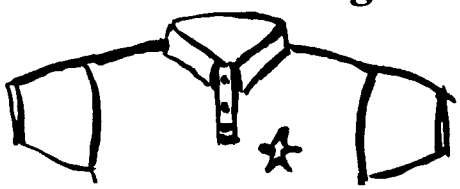

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phy condemns. Since for Rorty nothing can or should be shown to be good, he cannot appreciate the moral prudence of Aristotle or Burke that seeks to arbitrate between two goods, whether they are democracy and good government or good government and philosophy.

In consequence, Rorty, for all his "honesty," flatters the people and invites the intervention of extremists who are interested in maximizing but don't care about freedom and equality. Straussians such as Bloom, however, are able to tell it as it is, precisely because they insist that the simplistic goal of maximizing democracy without considering whether it is good is neither feasible nor desirable. Bloom's book is as frank as it could be, particularly on topics such as women and blacks, on which we punish frankness. Bloom's critics say nothing risky. They think it boldness to overstate, and they think it moderation to uphold our conventions.

BLOOM BEGINS his book by contrasting the democratic man (whom I have called the responsible democrat) of the American founding with the openness of the "democratic personality" that we all know too well. In doing so he relies on the scholarship of other Straussians, especially Martin Diamond, Herbert J. Storing, and Harry V. Jaffa, on the American founding. Against the flow of mainstream scholars who have come to regard the Founders as moral compromisers, guilty of using Rorty's cynical prudence, these Straussians attempt to defend the Founders' moral integrity by restoring their intellectual stature. However difficult today's historians, political scientists, and philosophers may find it to accept, Madison (for example) knew better than they what he was doing—and he was smarter, too. Once one is freed of the historicist's prejudice that diminishes every previous time and impoverishes one's own, the American founding comes to sight as a thoughtful, comprehensive deed worthy of respect and study. It does not deserve to be dismissed as cynical, and it deserves more than a patriotic salute.

Madison was wiser and more trustworthy than Dewey by far, but Rorty manages to diminish even Dewey. Rorty is not a Deweyan but a "Deweyan historicist." He has abandoned Dewey's science and therewith Dewey's naive faith in the mutual support of science and democracy. For Dewey's science Rorty substitutes John Rawls's "reflective equilibrium." It is his test of truth: Does an idea accord with "our common sense" or "what we believe and desire"? The conformism of this test does not have the dignity of conservative respect for tradition, because it lacks any sense of duty or higher calling. It looks like freedom because it is receptive to change, but how is it freedom to be a slave to fashion? Such a position is merely "with it," whatever the latest "it" happens to be. From the shifting ground of his "with it" Heideggerean Dewey, Rorty complains that Straussians are not wholehearted loyalists of democracy. But as his concluding remarks show, he is the one who has given up on America. Some Deweyan.

Rorty sees himself as the culmination of Dewey, whom he sees as the culmination of modern philosophy beginning with Bacon, Descartes, and Hobbes. He has no strong sense of the difference between culmination and corruption, because any such sense would involve him in a criterion, on the way toward the dreaded eternal. So he chooses to look on the bright side. He does not notice that the modern philosophy whose grand project was to enlighten the people now takes, in its latest version, its enlightenment from the people. His bewilderment at this reversal looks to him like greater self-confidence, as he eagerly bids us grasp the tiller of his rudderless boat. The troubles of American democracy today come not from too much ambition but from fear of too much ambition, from doubts we do not recognize as nihilistic about the worth of the American experiment in self-government—or of any experiment in anything.

IT IS also said that (Rorty plays this one softly) there is a hidden conservative agenda behind the Straussians' lordly claim to be the partisans of an impossible best regime. When Bloom remarks on the alliance of the ancient philosophers with gentlemen, and then follows this up by asserting that Harvard, Yale, and Princeton are not what they used to be—well, these critics think they have really caught him with his pants down, his hidden agenda exposed. And what about all those Straussians working in Washington for the Reagan administration?

Most of the Straussians in Washington (who are neither many nor powerful) went there because they could not find jobs in universities. For some time, American universities have been increasingly politicized—and for the reason I discussed earlier, the dominant opinion shared by Bloom's critics that universities have no way of escaping politics. In this view, the choice is only between a hidden agenda and an open one, between a facade of dishonest impartiality and an honest declaration. Of course the choice goes then to those with an open agenda. That is why Marxists and others who have learned how to be both shrewd and brazen are ever so much more respectable in our universities now than Straussians, who seem inhibited when they try to be responsible.

Speaking inhibitedly for myself alone, I will say that I do not think it a crime, legal or moral, to be a Republican. All those today who are serious about the menace of Soviet imperialism—and this includes Rorty and the editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC—run the risk, as they well know, of being attacked as conservatives, or worse, neoconservatives. To become Republicans, such persons have only to consider why they choose to be attacked in this most important matter by their partisan friends. It's more sensible to arrange it that those who attack you are your enemies.

There's a big difference in this regard between political and philosophical friendship. Political friends have to suppress lesser disagreements for the sake of the greater disagreement with political enemies; philosophical friends can air all their lesser disagreements because of their greater agreement in loving truth, that is, because they are philosophers. Loving truth together is more than an abstract, formal agreement, because this love is a virtue, a habit of living. Such a virtue brings with it a host of lesser virtues, but it does not need any common interest or shared values beyond itself.

AS TO concrete issues in universities, Rorty will have his hands full if he wants to require two years of the Great Books in order to remedy the gross faults in primary and secondary education that have come about through the influence of his mentor John Dewey. Here too his liberal friends will give him little but grief, and he will be cheered only by the tiny band of conservatives on the faculties of American universities. His objection to putting skills over content applies to universities as well as to schools, because the academic disciplines in the social sciences and humanities have become ever more methodological, thus more hostile to the Great Books. His lament that there will not be enough

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Straussians in place to teach these books does not do justice to his own capacity for being persuaded by a good argument—or to his own doctrine that tells him to be impressed by a new trend.

The open agenda of Straussians is the reading of the Great Books for their own sake, not for a political purpose. Because of their elevation, the Great Books do not offer a message that is simply political. Because of their diversity, they do not contain a single political message, including that most boring of messages, relativism. Anyone who reads them in order to confirm what he already believes does not really read them. Since we all have beliefs, such reading is an effort at first; later it turns out to be the highest pleasure there is.

Bloom wrote his book about the superficial "openness" of our day that denies both the need for effort and the existence of that pleasure. Anyone who wants to follow up Bloom's book can turn to the works of Strauss, but despite what Rorty says, he will not find any Straussism there. It's no accident that people talk of Straussians but not of Straussism. Of course there are characteristic themes—the importance of founding, the centrality of politics, the presence of religion, the rhetoric of exotericism, the rivalry between poetry and philosophy, the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, and the search for an author's intention. But these all return to the tension between politics (what is necessary for the health of society) and philosophy (what is required in thinking). To reflect on this tension is political philosophy; and political philosophy is an attempt to gain knowledge, not power.

No doubt the reading of Great Books would strengthen our democracy, but not if it is done for that purpose alone. In its best moments our democracy includes and respects what transcends it. That's how we used to understand our universities. To judge from the response to Bloom's book, the American people have a better sense of this understanding than do the universities themselves.

THE BIG BARGAIN

Buying Into America: How Foreign Money Is Changing the Face of Our Nation by Martin and Susan Tolchin

(Times Books, 288 pp., $18.95)

More than $1.3 trillion in foreign investment has poured into the United States from around the world in recent years—80 percent of it placed in government and private securities, the rest in bank assets, stocks and bonds, real estate, and factories. Foreigners now own much of our oil and gas industry, more than half of our cement industry, four of our top ten chemical companies, almost 50 percent of the commercial buildings in downtown Los Angeles, a third of downtown Houston, almost 20 percent of American bank assets, and substantial parts of our major investment houses. They own our book publishers—Doubleday, Viking, Dutton; our supermarkets—A & P, Grand Union, Giant Food; our landmarks—Watergate, Rockefeller Center. CBS Records was just sold to Sony, Firestone tires to Japan's Bridgestone. General Mills has even sold off much of Betty Crocker to foreigners. (Good ol' Betty Crocker a foreigner!)

With the dollar now priced so low against foreign currencies, it's as if America were having a fire sale, with every company and building marked 40 to 50 percent off the original price. Foreign purchases of American companies grew by more than 50 percent last year, to $38 billion. In the first nine months of 1987, profits from U.S. affiliates of foreign companies rose 98 percent, to $10.9 billion, from $5.5 billion a year earlier. Some investment bankers estimate that foreign buyers could account for as much as 20 percent of U.S. acquisitions this year, up from five percent in 1987.

Martin and Susan Tolchin, *New York Times* correspondent and professor of political science respectively, have produced a timely and alarming (and somewhat alarmist) book about this sell-off of America. It is carefully researched and well documented, and it raises some important issues. Several of its conclusions are worthy of consideration by policymakers. But the book is also frustrating, because it mistakes symptoms for causes and casts blame in the wrong direction.

The Tolchins worry first about America's political independence. They reveal, for example, how executives of Sony threatened both the Florida and California legislatures with cancellation of plans to build facilities in their states unless the unitary tax—based on a company's worldwide sales of products manufactured in the state—was repealed. Sony, along with a coalition of Japanese and European investors, also contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to the election campaigns of California legislators who promised to cooperate. Margaret Thatcher lobbied Ronald Reagan on the matter. Florida soon relented; California eventually followed.

The Tolchins also worry about the possibility that foreign lenders might suddenly decide to stop lending us all the money we want, thus forcing us into a deep recession, or worse. Or that foreign investors might trigger banking crises by suddenly pulling out their deposits. The failures of two major banks—Continental Illinois in Chicago and Franklin National in New York—were due, in part, to such unfaithfulness, they tell us. And they quote Felix Rohatyn, who is haunted by the possibility that, once having pushed us into a fathomless depression, foreigners might then use their savings to purchase American companies for a song.

They worry about state governors who lure foreign companies into their jurisdictions to set up new factories at the expense of American firms. Tennessee offered all sorts of tax breaks and subsidies to Komatsu, the giant Japanese construction equipment corporation, to locate in Chattanooga. But Komatsu's chief international rival is our very own Caterpillar Tractor. Why should we be using taxpayer's money to help Komatsu outcompete Caterpillar in Caterpillar's home territory?

They worry about foreigners like Rupert Murdoch—until recently, an Australian—buying up our newspapers and television stations; or people like John P. McGoff, a conservative Michigan publisher, charged by U.S. government prosecutors as being an unregistered foreign agent for South Africa, purchasing an interest in the *Sacramento Union* and attempting to purchase the *Washington*

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Star to promote favorable images of his client in the United States.

And they worry, more broadly, about our loss of strategic industries to foreign owners. They ask, rhetorically, "Can the United States afford to lose the aerospace or computer chip industry to foreign interests? Can it afford to sell off its natural resources as rapidly as foreign investors can buy them up?"

They applaud Japanese managers who take over a failing Firestone tire plant in Tennessee and make it—and its work force—far more productive than before. Fourteen hundred workers kept their jobs, the union flourished and worked closely with management, and the region was spared the harsh effects of a factory closing. But even here, they worry about what may be a Faustian bargain. Are these the jobs of the future? Or are foreigners simply training us to be the unskilled assembly line workers of the next century?

The Tolchins make every effort to be even-tempered about all this. They rarely assert their own views, choosing instead to quote others. They try to point out the benefits of foreign investment. But their overall message is apocalyptic, and their sense of urgency occasionally breaks through: "Although the United States has entered the global economy, where all nations sacrifice a measure of independence, America seems to have gone overboard."

Several of their policy recommendations are sensible. They urge, for example, that the United States continue to press other nations to be as open to foreign ownership—of banks, natural resources, manufacturing companies—as we are. They ask that we stop giving foreigners who invest in America certain legal and financial advantages that we don't give our own companies. They suggest that we keep better track of the extent, sources, and objects of foreign ownership, and more diligently police campaign contributions to ensure they do not come from foreigners. And they want the states to stop bidding against one another in quest of foreign investors, so that bids are not unnecessarily high.

But they also want the United States to bar foreign investment "where it constitutes an unfair threat to American business or American interests." This is tough talk, and if it were taken seriously it would cause no end of mischief. The problem is not that foreigners are coming to own more and more of America. (By the way, although the trend is real, the overall amounts are still paltry; foreigners now own less than eight percent of our capital stock.) The problem isn't with them at all. It is that we Americans continue to consume far more than we invest. Last year our appetites exceeded our incomes by about $150 billion. And because of this profligacy, we have come to rely even more on foreigners to make up the difference. Foreigners have lent us money—we owe them almost $400 billion so far. Foreigners are also taking an equity stake in us, in the form of our land, commercial buildings, factories, and equipment.

What to do? We face the same choice as anyone living beyond his means. On the one hand, we can grow so poor that we again live within our means. This is not difficult to accomplish. As the dollar declines and everything we may want to purchase from the rest of the world becomes more expensive, we automatically grow poorer. We could become poorer even more quickly if we discouraged foreigners from lending us more money or buying any more of our assets in the first place. Restrictions of the sort that the Tolchins recommend would have this result.

THE BETTER alternative is to become so productive that we can afford eventually to live in the high manner to which we have become accustomed. This strategy is somewhat more difficult to accomplish. It requires that we invest in our productive capacities—in our skills, education, research, roads, bridges, ports, new factories, and equipment. Where's the money for such new investment to come from? Surely we will have to reduce our consumption, at least in the short term. But some of the burden will be borne by the foreigners who build new factories in the United States, fill them with new equipment, and train our workers to be more productive than they've been in the past. In other words, rather than being a problem, or even a necessary evil, this form of direct investment in the United States is one way of solving our core dilemma.

But should we actually *pay* foreigners to invest here by luring them with tax breaks and subsidies? The answer is yes, if what we pay them to come here is less than would be the cost of building the factories, buying the equipment, and training American workers ourselves. The Tolchins question the wisdom of giving subsidies or tax breaks to foreign companies to set up shop in America, particularly when such companies are locked in competition with American corporations. Why give benefits to Komatsu when poor Caterpillar is struggling to compete with it?

But here again the authors misconstrue the nature of the problem. They assume, by implication, that what's good for Caterpillar or any such American-owned corporation is good for America—indeed, better for America than what's good for Komatsu, or any foreign-owned corporation. They forget that most large American corporations are making things all over the globe, buying parts wherever they can get them cheapest, and selling to whomever. Most of Singapore's exports to the United States, for example, are the products of American-owned corporations; one-third of Taiwan's exports fall into the same category. At least a quarter of America's trade deficit with Japan is

EMPIRE

(Luxembourg Gardens, 1986)

And yet how quietly it all begins
Filling with wet light the circling paths
Fronted by plane trees and pedestalled air:
This Saturday, like a sunken ship hauled
To the surface, its empty hull traversed
By fish now drying splendored with coins
And ore. The children huddle around their
Rented boats, the adults at their novels,
And stone lions leap across the fountain-
Spray to shake the toque in the ungloved hand
Of a Medici who has lost her head
To the lily-pads dragging the bottom.
And yet it all comes, the peals of laughter
From the pony carts, steam from the storm grates
Threading through the trees, the smell of *gaufres*
And diesel fumes, and the clouded windows
Of the palace struck blind against the sun,
Against the iron grilles and terraces,
The copper rooftops espaliered with rust,
It all comes and passes, pigeon-winged, up-
Gathered, ephemeral into the air,
Before the mind, before the slow-rolling
Constellations can watermark the glare.

SHEROD SANTOS

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due to American corporations buying parts from the Japanese, assembling them, and then sticking on an American label. IBM Japan is one of that nation's major exporters of high-tech equipment. In fact, during the last 20 years, while American exports have steadily declined as a percent of world exports, American-owned corporations—exporting from around the world—have retained their share of world exports.

The point is that in the new world economy, corporations are as footloose as money. It makes little difference whether the new factory in Chattanooga is American-owned or foreign-owned. Caterpillar should have an equal chance of bidding to build it, of course. But there's no reason not to award the bid to Komatsu, if Komatsu will do it for less. The real issue is not who owns the factory, but what is the quantity and quality of new productive capacity added to the United States.

Americans are well practiced in the ancient art of blaming foreigners for our own failings. Election years, in particular, serve to bring out our xenophobic tendencies, as Richard Gephardt has been busy showing us. Foreigners make convenient targets. Getting "tough" on them requires no new taxes, and foreigners cannot vote. But this is also a dangerous practice, for it convinces us that the problem is external, and that all we need do is somehow control its spread. It absolves us of responsibility, and thus renders us less capable of making the sacrifices and changes that are required.

ROBERT B. REICH

UNLIKELY HEROES

Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech by Richard Polenberg

(Viking, 431 pp., $24.95)

In this eloquent and moving book, Richard Polenberg reminds us that our cherished liberties were tightly circumscribed in the not so distant past. This harsh reality was discovered by a small group of Jewish anarchists from New York's Lower East Side. They were recent immigrants from Russia who fiercely opposed the Wilson administration's Siberian expedition of 1918. Led by an anarchist named Jacob Abrams, the group dropped some leaflets from a tenement rooftop on the night of August 22, 1918. Their statement, in Yiddish and in English, demanded that American workers not fight the workers of Russia, that arms not be used to interfere with the progress of the Russian Revolution. Those responsible for the leaflet were arrested and charged with conspiracy "to utter, print, write, and publish . . . disloyal, scurrilous, and abusive language about the United States . . . language intended to incite, provoke, and encourage resistance to the United States in the war with Germany."

The trial was held in October 1918, in an atmosphere permeated by patriotic bond drives and Liberty Loan rallies. The judge was Henry DeLamar Clayton Jr., a former senator and the author of the Clayton Act, part of the political heritage of Wilsonian liberalism. Committed to the patriotic fervor in New York, and full of distrust of immigrants and of a passionate hatred of Germany, Clayton betrayed his feelings during a cross-examination of Abrams:

> Abrams, speaking in a soft voice with a distinct Yiddish accent, was earnestly attempting to defend his anarchist beliefs. "This government was built on a revolution," Abrams said. "When our forefathers of the American Revolution—" That was as far as he got. "Your what?" Judge Clayton asked. . . . The judge had made his point, and the jury had no doubt gotten it.

Abrams made a living working as a bookbinder. The Southern judge regarded this as uncouth and frivolous, and lectured Abrams on the virtues of farming, suggesting that he go to the country and work the land.

The men who were arrested included two anarchists, Abrams and Hyman Lachowsky, a socialist named Samuel Lipman, and Jacob Schwartz, who died before the trial as a result of complications suffered from a beating during his interrogation. Joining them was an anarchist feminist, as she would be called today, Mollie Steimer, 20 years old, who stood four feet nine inches and weighed all of 90 pounds. Tough, dogmatic, and principled, Steimer never gave an inch. She demanded that her lawyer refer to her as Miss Steimer, not as Mollie; nor would she rise from her seat when the judge entered the court. When her release from prison was finally arranged, in exchange for permanent exile from America, Steimer almost refused to leave. A railroad strike had been threatened, and she would not travel by train if scabs were manning the cars.

It was the writing of an obscure Yiddish leaflet, then, that tested the parameters of free speech in America. Until that time, all the justices of the Supreme Court, including Oliver Wendell Holmes, believed that free speech had limits in a time of war or crisis. Holmes had written majority opinions in earlier cases, including the *Schenck* and *Debs* cases, in which he argued that the words spoken by those two men were meant to obstruct the draft, and hence were punishable by the law. But Holmes had a probing mind, and he was constantly reconsidering his views. He was helped in this task by the legal thought of the libertarian group around Zechariah Chafee Jr. and Ernst Freund, who criticized the Court's decision in *Debs* in THE NEW REPUBLIC. With their encouragement, Holmes sought to develop a new standard.

The result was Holmes's now famous dissent from the majority in the *Abrams* case in 1919. In that dissent, Holmes wrote that "when men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas." Only the present danger of immediate evil could justify restricting speech. Noting that the defendants had received sentences of 20 years' imprisonment, harsh by any measure, Holmes stated that they had received those sentences "for the publishing of two leaflets that I believe the defendants had as much right to publish as the Government has to publish the Constitution of the United States."

Later, Justice Louis Brandeis, who had joined in Holmes's dissent, sought to develop an even clearer application of the standard of clear and present danger.

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Brandeis "endeavored not only to broaden the range of speech protected by the First Amendment, but also to provide a convincing reason why speech deserved such broad protection." But Holmes and Brandeis were an embattled minority. The climate at Harvard was such that Chafee, who had supported their dissent, actually was forced to stand "trial" at the law school for the views he expressed about the case. Conservative alumni were furious that Chafee had supported an amnesty petition for Abrams, a step they believed made the legal scholar unfit "to be entrusted with the training of youth."

THE TRIBULATION of an eminent Harvard jurist was little, of course, compared with what the defendants suffered for their opinions. The conditions at the federal prison in Atlanta were far from humane. Prisoners were flogged, forced to wear leg irons and chains, hung by their thumbs, and thrown into dank isolation cells. Steimer, stubborn as ever, refused to abide by any prison rules, which she considered "arbitrary and illegitimate." At the workhouse on what is now Welfare Island in New York, she was forbidden to see her family and was denied all privileges. Finally, defense lawyer Harry Weinberger arranged to have their sentences commuted, on the condition they all be deported to Russia, never to return to the United States—unless it was to return to prison, to serve out their time. And so, Polenberg writes, they were deported without "an inkling of the suffering that awaited them, and the many sacrifices they would have to make."

As highly principled anarchists caught up in the euphoria surrounding the first worker's revolt, Abrams and his comrades believed in the possibility that Soviet communism might offer a humane future. Exile, however, proved bitter. Polenberg's book comes alive as he describes the CHEKA's war against the anarchists. At first the Bolsheviks allowed "anarchists of ideas," those who swallowed their objections to the state and supported the young revolution, to function in Soviet society. But by 1920 the Bolsheviks moved to destroy the "fragile truce between Lenin and the pro-Soviet anarchists." Having defeated the White Armies, the Red Army felt free to confront the anarchists, whose support in struggle they no longer required. And the anarchists "were no longer willing, for the sake of revolutionary solidarity, to keep their grievances to themselves."

When the Bolsheviks crushed the Kronstadt rebellion in March 1921 by armed force, the anarchists' last illusions were shattered. Lenin gave orders to destroy all opposition. And Russian anarchists were given the same choice as Abrams and his comrades in America: to stay in prison or to leave the country. The United States had public trials, attorneys for the arrested, and appeals to higher courts, but none of these blandishments of "bourgeois" law were available for Soviet political prisoners. Polenberg observes ironically that, the difference in social systems notwithstanding, the anarchists were treated in the same way by both governments. Neither wanted them dead, only politically impotent.

Fortunately Abrams and Steimer were fully aware of what was happening in the Soviet Union, and they decided to seek asylum once more, this time in Mexico. Steimer, militant as always, had little choice. After Lenin's crackdown, she persisted in trying to organize the Russian anarchists, and the GPU arrested Steimer and her husband, Seyna Fleishen. No longer considered a political criminal and awarded a separate status in prison, she met with the treatment given the worst criminals. Thus when the GPU gave her the choice of life in prison or exile, she quickly chose the latter. And Abrams and his wife, having set up the very first Soviet steam laundry in the Kremlin basement, left the Soviet Union voluntarily in 1925.

Steimer died in Mexico in 1980. Abrams, suffering from painful and incurable throat cancer, died in 1953. If there is a deficiency in Polenberg's book, it is his cursory and brief treatment of Abrams, whom he describes early on as a tough man, and clearly the leader of his circle. Strangely, Polenberg seems not to have made use of Abrams's autobiographical account, published in Yiddish in Mexico and available at the YIVO Institute in New York. Nor, evidently, did he seek to speak with many of Abrams's friends and relatives who might have given him letters and information about his life.

JACOB ABRAMS was my cousin. He had a profound effect on me as a boy. The story that Polenberg tells is a portion of my family history, lore passed down through the generations—part of my own tradition, not only the tradition of American dissent. Exile in Mexico was hard for Abrams. But he made a new life for himself as a publisher of Yiddish and Spanish books. His time was spent with the exile community—with anarchists fleeing Franco's rule in Spain, with Trotsky and his family, with Steimer.

For me, Abrams—that was what we always called him—was the gentle anarchist. With his long hair and his mustache, he showed infinite patience to a young and demanding eight-year-old, and then again five years later, when my family traveled through Mexico. I still have two of the books he inscribed to me, the collected writings of Voltaire and Gerald Brenan's *The Spanish Labyrinth*, from which, he assured me, I would learn the true story of the Spanish Civil War. One day in Cuernavaca, my mother pointed out David Alfaro Siqueiros, the Mexican muralist, whose work we had recently seen. Siqueiros came toward us, to say a few words to Abrams. Suddenly Abrams turned and shouted, "I do not talk to thugs and assassins," and stormed away, taking me by the hand. I was amazed at the sudden turn in the character of someone I knew to be a kindly man. But Abrams told me of Siqueiros's role in the machine-gun raid on Trotsky's fortified home in Coyacan. "He may be a painter to some," I recall him saying, "but he is really just a common murderer."

FINALLY, unable to receive adequate medical treatment for his cancer in Mexico, Abrams was granted an emergency visa to come to Philadelphia for surgery, thanks to the discreet efforts of union leaders such as Charles Zimmerman of the ILGWU. I shall never forget the sight of this dying man, staying at my parents' house in New York a few days before the trip to Philadelphia, humiliated by the constant presence of two FBI agents assigned to watch him every moment, day and night. The U.S. government, uncomfortable with the thought of the dangerous anarchist, perhaps anxious that he would use the occasion to drop another leaflet from another rooftop, had detailed two armed agents to watch the steps of a man who could barely move.

They must have been amazed, sitting at our table and hearing my uncle and father yelling at Abrams in defense of Stalin. "That monster is no better than Hitler," I recall Abrams saying. "He destroyed the hopes we had for revolution and killed thousands." Abrams's anarchist circle, which had expected nothing but persecution in capitalist America, still had grasped the truth about revolu-

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tionary Russia years earlier. As Steimer wrote to a friend in 1924, the Communists had become "the most reactionary, most brutal and autocratic rulers, who care for nothing but the maintenance of their power."

How small of America to remind this dying man, whom it had finally let return to the land from which he had been expelled, that even on the way to his death he was a prisoner of the state. But then the anarchist Abrams was most likely not surprised. This final act of stupidity by the American government probably confirmed him in the beliefs he lived and died for. He and his comrades never succeeded in creating the world they hoped to build. "Their efforts," writes Polenberg, "did not reduce the inequality, misery, or injustice in the world, much less the brutality." They did give us, however, something they themselves never anticipated. Their actions led Holmes to narrow the definition of the "clear and present danger," and thus to increase the civil liberties of all Americans.

As Polenberg notes, 50 years later the Supreme Court adopted Brandeis's direct incitement standard, citing the *Abrams* dissent as precedent and incorporating it into the more libertarian test of free speech. Thus the *Abrams* case "contributed . . . to a process of judicial reconsideration which eventually placed freedom of speech on a firmer constitutional basis." It was not the goal Abrams and Steimer had in mind, "yet it was surely a goal worth achieving." Polenberg has told their story with an appropriate eloquence. Students of American law and American dissent are in his debt.

RONALD RADOSH

Ronald Radosh is writing a book with Harvey Klehr about the *Amerasia* case.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

terribly inaccurate. The author has been one of my closest friends for over 25 years. His target, Robert Strauss, has been my boss, friend, and mentor since 1975. I have had the privilege of working with him in virtually all of his many roles and responsibilities during that period. TRB has completely ignored the very concrete and substantial accomplishments of Bob Strauss's career in Washington. He took a disorganized and disillusioned Democratic Party and delivered to nominee Jimmy Carter in 1976 a purposeful, potent organization. He took over floundering multilateral trade negotiations and, by dint of persistence and judgment, produced a very significant international agreement, passed almost unanimously by the U.S. Congress. Finally, he has built up a major law firm in Washington, which is now engaged in a diversified and successful practice, of which legislative work is only one small part.

It is difficult for TRB and other theorists to accept, but policies can only be changed by people reaching agreement, not by philosophies, no matter how brilliant. Bob Strauss's strength is that he understands people and can relate to their diverse hopes and concerns; he keeps lines of communication open and develops relationships of real trust between previously implacable adversaries. This makes him a brilliant negotiator—a skill that has served his party and his country well in numerous critical situations.

Bob Strauss's wisdom comes from intuition and experience, not books and editorial columns. He has never pretended to be a great liberal or a great philosopher. But he possesses deep-rooted beliefs about the importance of the governmental process and the necessity of providing leadership and assistance.

RALPH J. GERSON
Northville, Michigan

REDSKINS COLORS

To the editors:

Nicholas von Hoffman is free to dislike football and, I suppose, to hold those who enjoy watching it in such disdain ("The Great Pig Out," February 29). I cannot accept, however, his suggestion that all of the celebrating throughout D.C. after the Redskins' victory is destructive, regressive, or racist. Pride in the community, the team, and even in one's race are rare—and should be celebrated. I too would like black physicists and novelists (or any physicist or novelist for that matter) to receive the kind of attention for their talents and accomplishments that athletes do. But what is wrong with a lot of people feeling really good about the team, and perhaps themselves, even for a short time?

CHRISTINE W. NICOLAIDES
Washington, D.C.

TRB, *from page 4*

of government seems to be exactly the right one: let capitalism do its powerful thing, but don't shy away from using the state to nurture it and spread its blessings more fairly. This used to be called "neoliberalism" a couple of years ago, before that became a term of contempt having more to do with hairstyles than political philosophy. Like Dukakis himself, it is pragmatic and unexciting, compared with the hysterical prescriptions of Jackson and Gephardt. And you can quibble endlessly about the details. But in general Dukakis has the right Democratic answer to the blind anti-government approach of the Republicans.

Is Dukakis "too liberal"? Well, in Illinois, his only major defeat, he came in third behind two candidates to his left. The "too liberal" charge concerns Dukakis's views on foreign policy. No one can honestly argue that he's a member of the "hate America" or "blame America" brigade. But he takes a high-minded approach that strikes many as naive, emphasizing treaty commitments, consensus with allies, non-violent good works like development assistance, and an extreme reluctance to initiate hostilities.

Foreign policy is an area in which the traditional notion that views "inside the Beltway" are to the left of the rest of the country is completely outmoded. The cocoon of official Washington protects hawkish attitudes that the rest of the country, rightly or wrongly, doesn't begin to share. A new poll by Peter Hart Associates for *Rolling Stone* indicates that barely a quarter of the 18-to-44-aged population would even fight to defend Western Europe! Dukakis is clearly to the right of this group. But he articulates a form of nationalism, combining pride in America's values with a decent loathing of bloodshed, that might help change their minds.

"For those who want another election blowout," says Al Gore, "who want the Democrats to lose 49 out of 50 states, go ahead and vote for Mike Dukakis." Neither the polls nor common sense support the conceit that Al Gore or any other Democrat is more electable in November than Dukakis. He's no political consultant's dream of a candidate, but there's something about him and what he's saying that a lot of people like. It's time for some heavy-handed media analysis of "the Dukakis magic." □

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Abu Vidal

THERE IS A strange dissociation, in the capital, of engagement from experience. In Washington, an opinion is an experience. Ideas and numbers are furiously attacked and furiously defended by people who have never seen, heard, tasted, or touched, except in the activity known as "fact-finding," the corners of the world whose crises are the foundations of their careers. The Palestinian uprising has made me hungry to see. For four long months, this city has felt very far away from history. It was to get a little closer that I went to the national convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, in that part of Arlington near the airport that looks like Alphaville, to hear the report of four Palestinians.

AS I EXPECTED to, I learned. I was especially enlightened by Hisham Awartani, an economist at An-Najah University in the West Bank, by his analysis of Israel's protectionist trade policies in the territories. And I was affected by his criticism of his own community. Of course he supported the PLO. But he was also withering, before these hundreds of finely dressed people wrapped smartly in *kafiyehs*, about the Palestinian bourgeoisie, about the threat that their consumerism poses to their commitment. And he bitterly denounced the Arab governments for forbidding demonstrations in support of the Palestinians, noting unhaltingly that the only demonstrations in the Middle East support of the Palestinians have taken place in Israel. "As they say in Hebrew, *khaval*," he concluded about the Arab regimes, using the common Israeli word for "too bad." It was a beautifully overdetermined, naturally decent moment.

MANY OF THE people I met received their Zionist guest courteously. Some of them seemed as curious about me as I was about them. (I was baited by a young Jewish bookseller, though, for reasons best known to his bar mitzvah teacher. I think he wanted to play the good Jew, bad Jew game.) But I do not mean to be sentimental. I spoke with some who were under the impression that Arab moderation means a willingness to let Jews live in a secular, democratic state of Palestine. I was reminded of the full-page ad in that morning's *Times*, according to which "in Israel, as in South Africa, minimum justice requires dismantling the apartheid state and replacing it with a democratic secular Palestine." What would maximum justice require? Generally, the assembly in Arlington seemed much more against things than for things. I detected not anger, which is large, but resentment, which is small. At this plastic hour in the history of their Palestinian brothers, they were displaying a kind of school spirit. There was something about their good feeling that was unworthy of the time, something petty, something vicarious. They had come together to magnify their enemy, and throw darts.

THE ENEMY, I learned from the dais, included me. "I want to welcome all the FBI informers in the room, and the people who take notes for the Israeli lobby," said the puerile James Abourezk, the ADC's chairman, to the thousand at brunch. "We are even blessed with a representative of THE NEW REPUBLIC." I thought I was visiting the other side quietly, representing myself, for my own purposes. I reflected, too late, that perhaps I should not have eaten their hummus. That was not the last of the afternoon's references to me, or to this magazine. A form of flattery, I guess. Still, it feels funny to seem fearful.

SITTING NEXT TO Abourezk was the grotesque Gore Vidal, whose name had appeared in that ad that called for the destruction of Israel. He looked like a statue in search of a pedestal. He'd come, in fact, to try one out. He signed books, looked lifeless, smiled uncomfortably at all the alien men and women who came up to thank him for what they mistook for solidarity, hid behind his senatorial girth. The man was a tourist in another people's tragedy. He had his own reason for being there. It was not his audience's reason for being there. They had a passion. He had a grudge. "The Middle East is something I don't begin to understand," he said. And again, "In my heart of hearts I'm not interested in the Middle East." The man is not a liar. Judging from his remarks, he doesn't know the difference between the West Bank and the Left Bank. But as I say, he had a reason.

IT WAS ABOUREZK'S reason for having him, too. They were using each other. After a few ridiculous remarks about the distinction of Vidal's writing, Abourezk confessed that he asked Vidal to address the ADC after he read, in the *Nation*, "The Empire Lovers Strike Back," Vidal's little anti-Jewish masterpiece of last year. Abourezk exulted that Vidal "scraped the skin off of two of America's leading Zionists," referring to Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter, who may count among their achievements that they smoked this princeling of prejudice out. The ADC had no problem in welcoming America's most distinguished nativist into its company; nor did it vex the members of this organization of Arab Americans modeled on organizations of Jewish Americans that their speaker did not allow that such Americans *are* Americans; nor did they seem to care that he was liking Arabs because he was disliking Jews. Abourezk read at length from Vidal's "essay," concluding: "'. . . But now that we're really leveling with each other, I've got to tell you I don't much like your country, which is Israel.' Ladies and gentlemen, Gore Vidal!!" A standing ovation.

ABU VIDAL ROSE to speak. His usual cheap patrician rant about "the American Empire" and "the national security state." "You always have to have an enemy," was his unself-aware summing up of the mentality he despised. Vidal looked like an entertainer afraid of the abyss. The old jokes played well with the new audience, though I wondered what the Arabs of Ramallah might think of the reception of such cynicism by the Arabs of Arlington. I was absorbed by Vidal's recollection that "I was a Zionist after Hitler, it seemed like a good idea, but I paid no attention to it." So he'd cheated the Jews, too. Now he's cheating the Arabs. It is a sly tribute to American pluralism. God bless a country in which you will never run out of somebody to cheat.

L. W.

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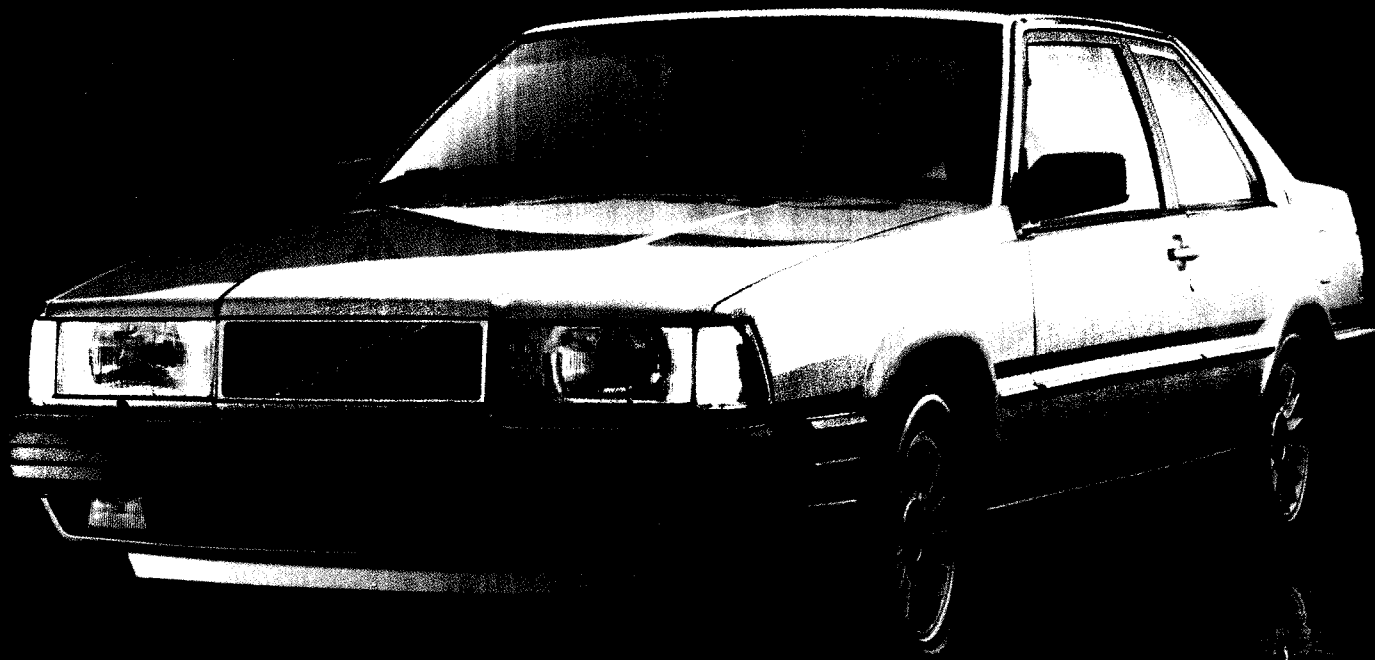

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